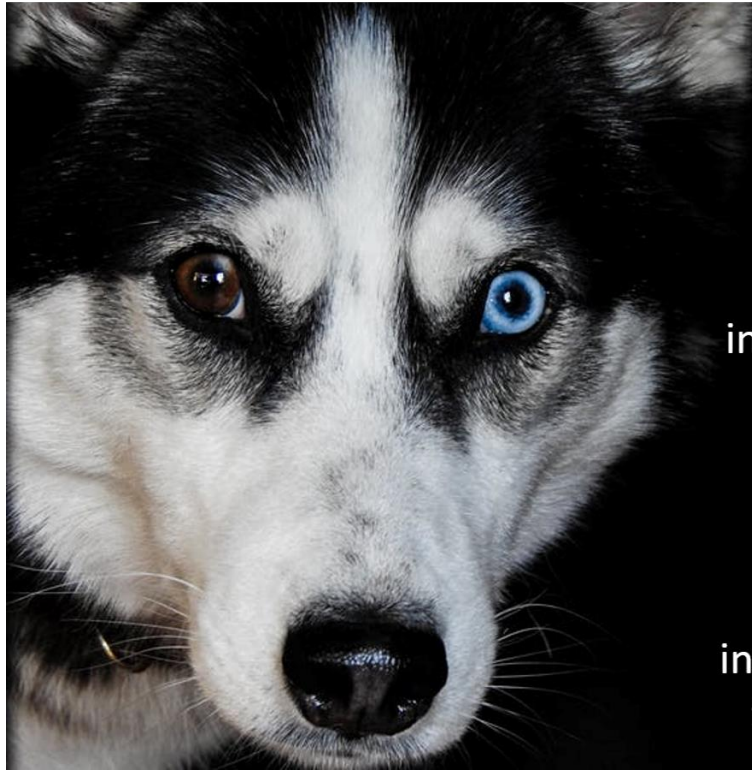


TRANSLATION PROBLEMS WITH PUNCTUATION

By David Lee Burris

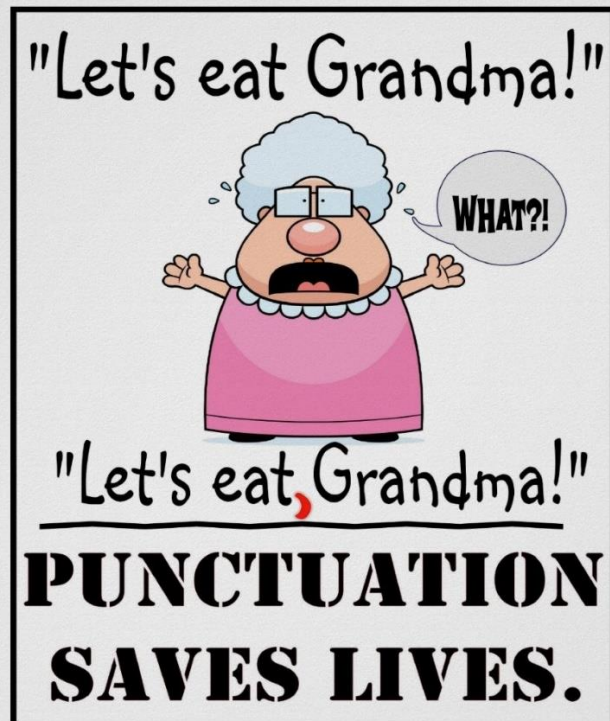
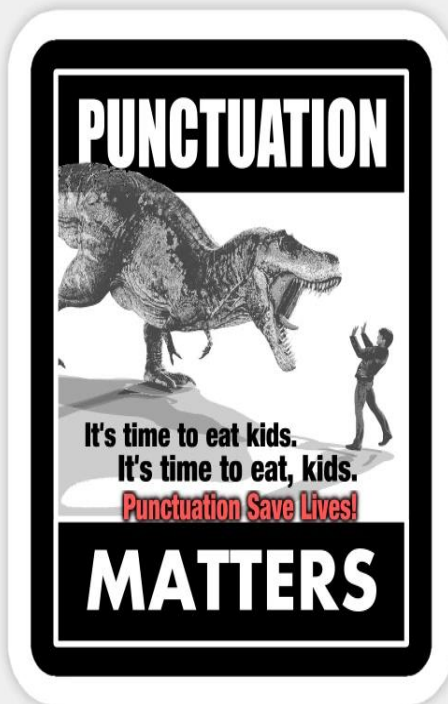


PUNCTUATION MATTERS!

Some people find
inspiration in cooking their
families and their dogs.

VS.

Some people find
inspiration in cooking, their
families, and their dogs.



Chapters, Verses, Punctuation, Spelling, and Italics

Kent P. Jackson, Frank F. Judd Jr., and David Rolph Seely

Ancient Divisions of the Text. Divisions of the texts in the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament have their own history and can be treated separately. [4] It was only when the Christian Bible combined the two Testaments & especially as the Bible was translated into various languages, that the texts were treated similarly, and a uniform system of numbered chapters and verses was superimposed upon the text that survives to the present time. Because the earliest surviving texts of the Bible date from centuries after the original authors, no one knows the nature of the original divisions. From what is known about the history of the divisions of the texts in the various manuscript traditions, three simple necessities can be identified that motivated the gradual creation of various units and later the systems of numbering those units. First, there was a need to identify and isolate specific units that could be read in worship services in the synagogue or the church. Second, the need occurred to provide a simple way of referring to a specific passage in the Bible to facilitate preaching, teaching, study, discussion & debate. Finally, both Jewish and Christian scholars created concordances of the language of the Bible & small numbered divisions of the text were almost a necessity for such concordances.

The oldest surviving Hebrew Old Testament texts are among the Dead Sea Scrolls, found beginning in 1947 in the caves at Qumran—the earliest dating to about 250 BC. These scrolls were written with pen and ink on pieces of leather that were sewn together to form scrolls. The Hebrew text was written in horizontal lines reading from right to left, in columns that were also read from right to left, and the scribes usually left slight spaces between the words. The system of division attested in these earliest biblical texts is neither chapters nor verses but paragraphs according to thematic or sense units. The system of division into paragraphs was preserved in the Jewish tradition and eventually became part of the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible (see below). The logic of paragraph divisions can be illustrated by several examples. In the Hebrew text of the Creation story in Genesis 1:1–2:3, the text is divided into seven paragraphs coinciding with the seven days of creation.

Within historical narrative, the paragraph divisions occur dividing a story into episodes. Thus 1 Samuel 1 is divided into five episodes tracing the life of Hannah and the birth of Samuel, and Isaiah 1 is divided into six paragraphs of varying lengths that indicate different topics. Paragraph divisions thus dramatically illustrate the episodic nature of biblical narrative and help the reader see the basic sense units of the text.

In addition to the division of the text into paragraph units, the Jewish tradition also developed a system of dividing the Torah into fifty-four larger units, each consisting of many paragraphs called *parashoth*. Those divisions provided suitable units to be read in the synagogue each Sabbath, with the intent that the whole of the Torah could be read in a calendar year. Each of those sections received a title based on the first word or words of the passage, but they were not numbered. The titles provided a label as a point of reference for teachers and students in the discussion of a text. The whole of the Hebrew Bible, except for the Psalms, is divided into paragraphs, but only the Torah is divided into *parashoth*.

The division into verses preceded the division into chapters. Within the paragraph divisions, Jewish scribes in the Mishnaic period (AD 70–200) developed a system of dividing the biblical text into verse units which roughly coincided with sentences. In addition to ordering the text for easier study, the verse divisions had a function in the reading of the Torah in the synagogue. **Because it was customary to read a section of the Bible in the original Hebrew and then stop and translate the passage into Aramaic, verses provided convenient places for the reader to stop and allow the interpreter to speak.** [5] Just as with the paragraphs and *parashoth*, the scribes did not number those verses.

About AD 500, a group of rabbinic Jewish scribes and scholars, called the Masoretes, saw that the text of the Bible as it was being transmitted began to show signs of changing through the years. The Masoretes standardized the Hebrew text by developing a system to write vowels, formalized word divisions, developed a set of accents to indicate ancient traditions of reciting the text, created concordances, counted all of the paragraphs, words, and letters, and inserted notes of explanation, references, and statistics in the margins and at the end of the texts in order to help future scribes. Their work is called the Masoretic Text. It became the model for all future scribal copying and the standard Bible for most Jews in the world to the present day.

Elements of the paragraph and verse divisions that were preserved in the Masoretic Text were later superimposed in various ways on the texts of the Greek and Latin translations of the Bible that were used by Christians. The King James translators had access to the Masoretic Text and implemented in their translation the original Jewish system of verse divisions together with the system of numbering they had inherited from other Christian Bible editions and translations. Following the model of the Hebrew paragraph divisions, the KJV translators or editors also created a system of paragraph markers throughout the Old Testament (¶) that most often parallels the divisions found in the Hebrew Bible.

As with the Old Testament, we do not have any original New Testament texts. But we do have very early textual evidence of the New Testament from the beginning of the second century, and those earliest manuscripts were written in the tradition of Greek texts of their day, in all capital letters (uncial script), with no division between the words or sections (*scriptio continua*). [6] **While the modern reader may be bewildered by a text that has no apparent breaks, [7] ancient Greek has a set of rhetorical particles that indicate natural pauses and breaks in the text.** Most New Testament texts were written on parchment or papyrus, and by the second century they began to be written in codices (books with leaves bound together—singular, *codex*) rather than on scrolls. [8]

Just as in the Hebrew tradition, the first system of division in the New Testament text was the paragraph, which naturally followed the rhetorical and grammatical particles in the text. One of the earliest systems of division in the New Testament is attested in the great Greek Bible manuscript Vaticanus, from the fourth century AD. In Vaticanus the scribes used a system in which the text was divided into sections corresponding to the break in sense. Those divisions were called in Greek *kephalaia*, which means “heads,” or “principals.” They were named and numbered in the margins and are the first attested form of a sort of chapter division in the New Testament. In Vaticanus, for example, the Gospel of Matthew was divided into 170 such units—62 in Mark, 152 in Luke, and 50 in John. The *kephalaia* were much smaller in length than the present-day chapters and are much closer to the paragraphs. In other Greek manuscripts, Acts, the epistles, and Revelation were similarly divided into chapters and smaller sections. [9]

As they did with the Old Testament, the King James translators indicated paragraph divisions in the New Testament with paragraph markers (¶). Often, but not always, **their paragraph divisions coincide with ancient chapter divisions known from early manuscripts, but for some reason that mystifies scholars to the present day, they end at Acts 20:36. [10]** **At the same time the *kephalaia* divisions in the New Testament were being made, rudimentary smaller divisions, indicated by simple forms of punctuation (sixth–eighth centuries), were beginning to be marked in the Greek texts that would eventually be reflected in the chapter and verse divisions after the thirteenth century.**

Eventually the Christians developed a need for a more precise way of citing scriptural passages for the Old and New Testaments, especially in the creation of concordances. The Christians incorporated in their biblical texts the Jewish paragraph and verse divisions of the Old Testament and the medieval chapter system of the New Testament.

The system of verse divisions that has prevailed to the present was the work of a Parisian book printer, Robert Estienne (Latinized as Stephanus; 1503–59). In the printing of his fourth edition of the Greek New Testament in 1551, he added his complete system of numbered verses for the first time. For the Old Testament, Stephanus adopted the verse divisions already present in the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible, and within Langton's chapters he assigned numbers to the verses. Following his own sense of logic as to the sense of the text, Stephanus took it upon himself, also within the framework of Langton's chapters, to divide and number the verses in the New Testament. His son reported that he did this work as he regularly traveled between Paris and Lyon. Whereas he probably did much of the work in the overnight stays at the inns, **his detractors spread the story that he did it while riding on his horse, and they attributed what they thought to be unfortunate verse divisions to slips of the pen when the horse stumbled.** In 1555 Stephanus published the Latin Vulgate—the first whole Bible divided into numbered chapters and verses. Soon those divisions became standard in the printed editions of the scriptures in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and eventually in all of the modern languages. The first English Bible to have the numbered chapters and verses of Langton and Stephanus was the Geneva Bible in 1560.

Some have criticized Stephanus's verse divisions as seeming arbitrary, citing the fact that while they often coincide with a single sentence in English, sometimes they include several sentences, sometimes they divide a single sentence, and sometimes they separate direct quotations from the situation of the speaker. They almost always divide paragraphs into fragments and cut up complete thoughts (e.g., Luke 2:5, 31). But clearly the advantages of organizing the text for reading and finding passages far outweigh any disadvantages. Following the style of the Geneva and Bishops' Bibles, the King James translators created a new and separate paragraph for each verse by indenting the first word and capitalizing the first letter of the first word, even if it is in the middle of a sentence.

For the casual reader, this can provide a rather serious obstacle, giving the false impression that the Bible is composed of a collection of disconnected sentences and phrases and making it difficult to see and understand any particular verse in its larger context. Consequently, a conscientious reader of the King James Version should always make a concentrated effort to see the bigger context of any particular verse of scripture, being aware that the chapter and verse divisions are artificial and subjective additions to the text that should not constrain us in the interpretation of the Bible. Most modern Bible translations preserve Stephanus's verses but do not create separate paragraphs for each verse, dividing the chapters instead into paragraphs based on the internal content of the scriptural text.

Punctuation

The earliest manuscripts of the Old Testament contained no punctuation. The Masoretes, working about a millennium after most of the original writers, formalized a system of punctuation that included sentence-ending marks and various marks within sentences to show major and minor breaks. The evidence suggests that in some cases the Masoretes may have made mistakes in sentence division, but on the whole they did an extraordinarily good job, and their work was a profound accomplishment.

When the translators and editors of the King James Bible and its predecessors applied European punctuation, in most cases they honored the Masoretic sentence endings, because they kept the verse divisions of Stephanus from the previous century. Thus, sentences in the King James Old Testament almost always end where sentences end in the Masoretic Text. **But within sentences, the English translators frequently subdivided the text differently.**

In New Testament manuscripts, there was a special kind of “punctuation” for words that were deemed sacred. Christian scribes and copyists tended to abbreviate, or more precisely contract, certain sacred names. Whenever the names of *God* and *Jesus* occurred, just to give two examples, these names were not written out in full but were regularly shortened to just the first and last letters with a stroke above them (e.g., G[—]D[—] = “God,” J[—]S[—] = “Jesus”). [\[12\]](#) This was not done to save space but rather because such names were regarded as endowed with some degree of holiness and were revered. This practice may have been influenced by earlier Jewish scribal practices in the Hebrew Bible, where the name of God, *Yahweh*, was sometimes set off with a different script.

Rudimentary punctuation marks began to appear gradually in the sixth and seventh centuries, usually indicating breaks in sentences. It was not until the seventh century that marks for breathing and accents began to appear, and it was not until the ninth century that the continuous writing in the texts began to be broken into individual words. The texts of the manuscripts Sinaiticus and Vaticanus contain a system of punctuation as indicated by a single point of ink on the level of tops of the letters, or occasionally by a small break in the continuous letters, or by a slightly larger letter, to indicate a pause in the sense of the text—a break usually corresponding with a sentence.

Later New Testament manuscripts from the sixth & seventh centuries developed a more complex system of marks, usually made by dots indicating a pause, a half-stop, and a full stop, and later a mark of interrogation, corresponding to the English usage of a comma, semi-colon, period, and question mark. Occasionally there were spaces between words to indicate a break in the sense.

Ninth-century manuscripts show that the scribes began to insert breaks between words in their texts, and punctuation marks were more frequently put at the end of words rather than above the letters as before. It should be noted that any markings or spaces added to the original continuous writing of the earliest New Testament manuscripts involved a most subjective act of interpretation by a scribe. There's evidence of ancient scribal disagreement in terms of punctuation and even word divisions. In addition, later scribes often went back and inserted marks of punctuation above the lines of earlier manuscripts (as in the case of Vaticanus) to reflect their own interpretations.

Therefore, the Greek texts used by the translators of the Bible into English, including Tyndale and the King James translators, already contained systems of word division, punctuation, breathings, and accents that certainly influenced the way the texts were interpreted & translated. The translators of each different English version had the ancient markings and divisions before them, but they variously punctuated their translations according to their understanding and interpretation of the text. [\[13\]](#)

The 1611 King James Bible was published by the firm of Robert Barker of London. Barker's family had been in the printing business for decades, and he had the distinction of being "Printer to the Kings most Excellent Maiestie," as is noted on the Bible's title page. With that designation, his company held the new Bible's franchise (sometimes with partners) into the 1630s, when the concession went to other printers, most often university presses. The origin of the punctuation in the 1611 KJV is not well understood. In large part it was determined by the translators, based on the Hebrew and Greek texts, earlier English versions, and the current usage of the time. But it likely also contains much influence from editors in Barker's shop. The punctuation in the 1611 edition was not done very consistently. **Readers today are often surprised to learn that the punctuation in our current KJV differs in thousands of places from that of the 1611 first edition.** Note the following example from Matthew 26:47–48, with the 1611 text (left) compared with the text of the 1979 Latter-day Saint edition (right):

47 And while he yet spake, loe,
Judas one of the twelue came,
and with him a great
multitude with swords and
staues from the chiefe Priests
and Elders of the people.

48 Now he that betrayed him,
gaue them a signe, saying,
Whomsoever I shall kisse, that
same is he, hold him fast.

47 And while he yet spake, lo,
Judas, one of the twelve, came,
and with him a great
multitude with swords and
staves, from the chief priests
and elders of the people.

48 Now he that betrayed him
gave them a sign, saying,
Whomsoever I shall kiss, that
same is he: hold him fast.

Usually punctuation differences are inconsequential, but sometimes they affect the meaning. Note Acts 27:18, which also has a word difference, a spelling difference, and an italic difference:

18 And being exceedingly tossed with a tempest the next day, they lightened the ship:

18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship;

The edition of 1612 made punctuation changes, and every printing thereafter for a century & a half made more. Each printing house that published the Bible modified punctuation in some way in virtually every edition & thus of the numerous editions between 1611 and the late eighteenth century, none were identical.

Mathew Carey, an American printer of the early 1800s, noted that the punctuation differences between various Bibles were “innumerable.” He gave as an example Genesis 26:8, which had “eight commas in the Edinburgh, six in the Oxford, and three in the Cambridge and London editions.” [\[14\]](#) Benjamin Blayney’s Oxford edition of 1769 made many punctuation changes, adding to the work of earlier editors. [\[15\]](#) Because it eventually became the standard KJV text, Blayney’s punctuation remains with us today.

Absent in the King James translation are quotation marks, which did not appear commonly until long after 1611. Capital letters are used to show where a quotation begins, but the end of a quotation can only be determined from the context.

The punctuation in today’s KJV is generally systematic and quite consistently done. It uses periods to end sentences, colons and semicolons for major breaks within sentences, and commas for smaller breaks. On the whole, the colons, semicolons, and commas seem to have been applied according to the objectives of the translators and later editors, not necessarily with the intent of reflecting the punctuation in the Hebrew and Greek texts.

By today's standards—and even by the standards of 1611 and 1769—the King James Version often feels over-punctuated, and readers sometimes find themselves tripping over its many tiny clauses that interrupt the flow of the text and occasionally make the meaning less clear. The punctuation is one of the features of the KJV that make it feel old. But this is neither unexpected nor accidental; it was intended to be that way. When the translation was originally published and “Appointed to be read in Churches” (1611 title page), its creators filled it with punctuation, believing that the congregational reading for which it was primarily intended would be enhanced by the short clauses, each set apart by a pause. Had they known that the Bible's greatest use would eventually be with families in private homes, perhaps they would have done otherwise. – Bible Department Research Paper

Punctuating the Bible

Written by Ben Shaw / Tuesday, November 1, 2011

Thus, for example, Ephesians 1:3-14 (one extended sentence in Greek) is divided into three sentences by the KJV, and up to fourteen or so sentences by some of the modern simple language translations. But this punctuation is a matter of editorial choice.

The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic (the Aramaic portions are as follows: Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:11-26; Daniel 2:4-7:28; Jeremiah 10:11, and two words in Genesis 31:47). The New Testament was written in Greek.

The original Hebrew (and Aramaic) manuscripts were written without vowels and without punctuation. The fact that vowels were not written is not as problematic as it might seem, due to the character of the Hebrew language. In fact, most Modern Hebrew is also written without vowels. Vowels are inserted only when necessary to prevent possible misunderstandings.

At least in the Hebrew manuscripts, the scribes did have spaces between words. For an example of such Hebrew manuscripts, see http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/sacredtexts/images/deadseascrolls_1g.jpg.

The earliest Greek manuscripts were written in all capital letters (called uncials), and were written without spaces between the words but with some punctuation, though the punctuation seems not to have been used consistently. For an example of such a manuscript, see <http://www.bible-researcher.com/papy66big.jpg>.

In the Middle Ages, Greek manuscripts began to be written in a cursive script called miniscules. These manuscripts at least had spaces between the words, and a more sustained use of punctuation. For an example, see <http://www.greekingout.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/ntmanuscript.jpg>. [Editor's note: the original URL (link) referenced is no longer valid, so the link has been removed.]

Over the course of the Middle Ages, the Hebrew scribes that preserved and copied the biblical text developed a system for indicating the vowels in each word. These scribes are known as Masoretes, and the text they produced is the Masoretic text. In addition to this vocalization system, they developed a system of accents for the text.

In this system, each word has its own accent. The accents serve three purposes. First, the accent indicates which syllable in the word is accented. Second, the accents serve as a sort of musical notation, indicating how the text is to be chanted. Third, the accents serve somewhat like punctuation. This system is still found in modern printed editions of the Hebrew Bible.

The punctuation in modern editions of the Greek New Testament comes in part from the punctuation found in manuscripts. In addition, punctuation is added by the editors of the Greek text.

The punctuation of English versions of the Bible is dependent in part on the punctuation indicated by the Hebrew accent system and on the punctuation of the Greek text. However punctuation in English is different and more extensive than punctuation in either Hebrew or Greek. Thus, the punctuation of English versions is determined by the translators and editors of the particular version.

Thus, for example, Ephesians 1:3-14 (one extended sentence in Greek) is divided into three sentences by the KJV, and up to fourteen or so sentences by some of the modern simple language translations. But this punctuation is a matter of editorial choice.

So for example, in Eph 1:4, the KJV reads, “that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.” The ESV reads, “that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love” (with the sentence then continuing into verse 5). The difference between the two renderings is that in the KJV, the phrase “in love” is understood to go with what precedes, as is indicated by the punctuation. In the ESV, the phrase “in love” is understood to go with what follows, again as indicated by the punctuation.

In this case, the KJV is supported by the punctuation as it is found in the 27th edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament. Most modern English versions, however, do the same as the ESV. In this case, the interpretational difference may be minimal. But where you put the comma, or whether you even use a comma, is not always so simple.

Benjamin Shaw, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Hebrew & OT and Academic Dean at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He blogs periodically at [GPTS Rabbi](#) where this article first appeared. It is used with permission.

TWO COMMAS LOADED WITH IMPACT

Should the comma be placed after “Today” in Luke 23:43?

The KJV says, “Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” The comma is placed before “Today” in the KJV, NASB, ESV, NIV, NLT, ESV, NKJV, etc. Those who hold to the doctrine of soul sleep, or those who cannot reconcile this reading with the fact that Jesus went to Hades, allege that the KJV and a host of other translations erroneously place the comma before “Today.” These critics claim that Jesus said, “I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with me in paradise,” joining “today” with the first clause. But it is futile to challenge this placement of the comma in the KJV based on either the doctrine of soul sleep or the fact that Jesus went to Hades.

Whether the doctrine of soul sleep is true or not for the general population is irrelevant here. The Bible is clear that the soul of Jesus did not sleep. 1 Peter 3:18-19 says that Jesus was “put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.” Thus, the question is not whether Jesus’ soul slept or not. Jesus’ soul did not sleep. The question is WHERE his soul went.

The Apostle Peter says that Jesus’ “soul was not left in hell (Hades)” (Acts 2:31). Thus, Jesus went to Hades, the abode of the dead. This is consistent with 1 Peter 3:18-19. Was Hades paradise? Not quite. But from Jesus’ parable of Lazarus and the rich man, we see that there was a place called “Abraham’s bosom,” which was a place of comfort (Luke 16:22-25) across a “great gulf” from the place of torment (Luke 16:26). This is probably the “paradise,” which Jesus referred to in Luke 23:43. Abraham’s bosom was neither in heaven nor in a place of torment. It was a place of comfort that was visible from the place of torment. Thus, what we can deduce from scripture strongly suggests that Abraham’s bosom was in Hades, just not in the fiery pit of it (which kept the unsaved souls). If we were to map Jesus’ course after death, he seemed to have gone to Abraham’s bosom (i.e. paradise) and also went to the “spirits in prison” to preach to them. – *Internet Search*

Johannine Comma

The **Johannine comma**, as it is called, is a sequence of extra words in 1 John 5:7-8 which appear in some early printed Greek texts (notably those of [Erasmus](#)), later versions of the Latin Vulgate, and in the King James Version of the Bible. See these words below *in italics* in the KJV and the same verse from the newer ESV.

- "For there are three that bear record (witness) *in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth*, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." -1 John 5:7-8, [KJV](#)
- "For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree." -1 John 5:7-8, [ESV](#)

Pre-16th century Greek manuscripts and translations

"These extra words are generally absent from the Greek manuscripts. In fact, they only appear in the text of four late medieval manuscripts. They seem to have originated as a marginal note added to certain Latin manuscripts during the middle ages, which was eventually incorporated into the text of most of the later Vulgate manuscripts." ^{^1}

"The passage is absent from every known Greek manuscript except eight, and these contain the passage in what appears to be a translation from a late recension of the Latin Vulgate. Four of the eight manuscripts contain the passage as a variant reading written in the margin as a later addition to the manuscript." (Ibid.)

Greek fathers

"The passage is quoted by none of the Greek Fathers, who, had they known it, would most certainly have employed it in the Trinitarian controversies (Sabellian and Arian). Its first appearance in Greek is in a Greek version of the (Latin) Acts of the Lateran Council in 1215." (Ibid.)

The Erasmusian promise

"[Erasmus](#) promised that he would insert the Comma Johanneum, as it is called, in future editions if a single Greek manuscript could be found that contained the passage. At length such a copy was found—or made to order." (Bruce Metzger)

However, on pg 291 (n2) of the (new) 3rd edition of *The Text of the New Testament* Bruce Metzger writes:

"What is said on p. 101 above about Erasmus' promise to include the Comma Johanneum if one Greek manuscript were found that contained it, and his subsequent suspicion that MS. 61 was written expressly to force him to do so, needs to be corrected in the light of the research of H.J. de Jonge, a specialist in Erasmian studies who finds no explicit evidence that supports this frequently made assertion; see his "Erasmus and the Comma Johanneum", *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, lvi (1980)," pp 381-9.

In *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7,8*, Michael Maynard records that H.J. de Jonge, the Dean of the Faculty of Theology at Rijksuniversiteit (Leiden, Netherlands), a recognized specialist in Erasmian studies, refuted the myth of a promise in 1980, stating that Metzger's view on Erasmus' promise "has no foundation in Erasmus' work. Consequently it is highly improbable that he included the difficult passage because he considered himself bound by any such promise."

In a letter of June 13, 1995, to Maynard, de Jonge wrote:

"I have checked again Erasmus' words quoted by Erika Rummel and her comments on them in her book *Erasmus' Annotations*. This is what Erasmus writes [on] in his *Liber tertius quo respondet ... Ed. Lei*: Erasmus first records that Lee had reproached him with neglect of the MSS. of 1 John because Erasmus (according to Lee) had consulted only one MS. Erasmus replies that he had certainly **not** used only one ms., but many copies, first in England, then in Brabant, and finally at Basle. He cannot accept, therefore, Lee's reproach of negligence and impiety. 'Is it negligence and impiety, if I did not consult manuscripts which were simply not within my reach? I have at least assembled whatever I could assemble. Let Lee produce a Greek MS. which contains what my edition does not contain and let him show that that manuscript was within my reach. Only then can he reproach me with negligence in sacred matters.'

"From this passage you can see that Erasmus does **not** challenge Lee to produce a manuscript etc. What Erasmus argues is that Lee may only reproach Erasmus with negligence of MSS if he demonstrates that Erasmus **could have** consulted any MS. in which the *Comma Johanneum* figured. Erasmus does not at all ask for a MS. containing the *Comma Johanneum*. He denies Lee the right to call him negligent and impious if the latter does not prove that Erasmus neglected a manuscript to which he had access.

"In short, Rummel's interpretation is simply **wrong**. The passage she quotes has nothing to do with a challenge. Also, she cuts the quotation short, so that the real sense of the passage becomes unrecognizable. She is absolutely not justified in speaking of a challenge in this case or in the case of any other passage on the subject" (emphasis in original) (de Jonge, cited from *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7,8*, Michael Maynard, p. 383).

Ancient Greek manuscripts of 1 John 5 are unreliable

Extant Greek manuscripts

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." (1 John 5:7, KJV)

"ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ὁ πατήρ ὁ λόγος καὶ τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα καὶ οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἐν εἰσιν" (1 John 5:7, 1894 Scrivener Textus Receptus)

1 John 5:7 in the KJV contains these words called the Johannine Comma (also known as the Comma Johanneum or the Heavenly Witnesses). This Comma is omitted from most modern translations of the Bible because most Greek manuscripts do not have them. Only 11 "late" Greek manuscripts contain the Comma, with 6 of them having it in the margin by an even later hand:

- 629 (14th century)
- 61 (16th century)
- 918 (16th century)
- 2473 (17th century)
- 2318 (18th century)
- 221 margin (10th century, Comma added later)
- 635 margin (11th century, Comma added later)
- 88 margin (12th century, Comma added in 16th century)
- 429 margin (14th century, Comma added later)
- 636 margin (15th century, Comma added later)
- 177 margin (11th century, Comma added later)

This might appear to be a small body of evidence, but they must be considered in light of the following facts particular to the text of 1 John 5:

- No [extant papyrus](#) contains 1 John 5. Since the earliest Greek manuscript of 1 John 5 is Vaticanus from c. 300 - 325 AD, there is at least a 200 year gap between the composition of 1 John 5 and its earliest surviving witness. [This is sufficient time for the text to be corrupted.](#)
- Although there are 5000+ Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, manuscripts which contain 1 John 5 are limited to about [480 manuscripts](#). Although the majority of these manuscripts lacks the Comma, [the majority also lacks the latter half of 1 John 2:23.](#)

- Most Greek manuscripts containing 1 John 5:6-8 would be considered "late" by modern standards. Of the about 480 manuscripts of 1 John 5, only 12 of these manuscripts are from before the 10th century (Nestle-Aland: *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th revised edition (2006)):
 - 01 (4th century)
 - A (5th century)
 - B (4th century)
 - K (9th century)
 - L (8th century)
 - P (9th century)
 - Ψ (9th century)
 - 048 (5th century)
 - 049 (9th century)
 - 056 (10th century)
 - 0142 (10th century)
 - 0296 (6th century)

The rest of the 480 manuscripts are minuscules from after the 10th century, the average being from around the 12th century.

Historical manuscripts

Evidence disappears over time. What we have existing now in the 21st century is not representative of what actually existed throughout history. Reformation era scholars seemed to have more Greek manuscripts containing the Comma. John Gill (1697 – 1771 AD), commenting on 1 John 5:7 says the Comma is found "in the Complutensian edition, the compilers of which made use of various copies; and out of sixteen ancient copies of Robert Stephens', nine of them had it" (*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*). John Calvin, commenting on 1 John 5:7, said, "The whole of this verse has been by some omitted. Jerome thinks that this has happened through design rather than through mistake, and that indeed only on the part of the Latins. But as even the Greek copies do not agree, I dare not assert any thing on the subject." (*Calvin's Commentaries*). Apparently in Calvin's time there were more Greek manuscripts with the Comma so as to give rise to a disagreement among the Greek copies. Francis Cheynell, the president of St. John's College, Oxford from 1648 to 1650, commented that the Comma is "to be found in copies of great antiquity and best credit." The following are excerpts from his book, *The divine trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, published in 1650:

"But it is objected by some that the words, *These three are one*. I Joh.5.7 are not to be found in some ancient Copies, and therefore it will not be safe to build a point of such weight and consequence upon such a weak foundation. To which we answer, It is true that these words are not to be found in the Syriack Edition, but they who speake most modestly, do acknowledge that the Syriack Edition is not Authentick." (p. 251)

"But then it is farther objected, that these words *These three are one* are wanting in some other Greek copies; for answer I proceed with my observations." (p. 253)

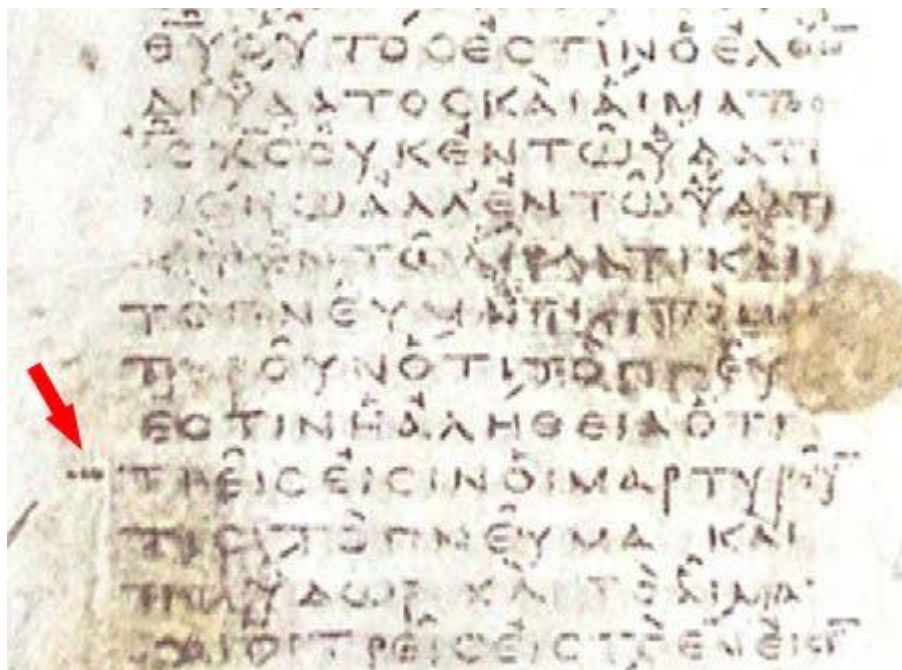
"8. These words, I Joh.5.7. are to be found in copies of great antiquity and best credit." (p. 255)

[ONLINE LINK TO Google Book: *The divine trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*](#)

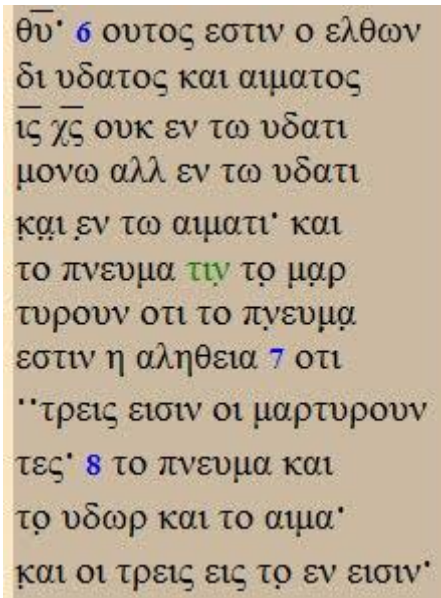
These testimonies by trusted Reformation era scholars should be given weight because in the centuries following their deaths Europe erupted into political and religious turmoil, resulting in the loss of manuscripts. It is presumptuous for us in the 21st century to think we have more evidence now than what scholars had in the 16th century. For more on this, please read: [Question: Aren't some Textus Receptus readings based on weak manuscript evidence?](#)

Umlaut in Codex Vaticanus

The oldest manuscript containing 1 John 5:7 demonstrates that a significant textual variant was known for 1 John 5:7 in the 4th century. In 1995 Philip B. Payne discovered "umlauts" (double dots) in the margins of various places in Codex Vaticanus. He and many scholars agree that these umlauts indicate lines where a textual variant was known to the scribe. You can read his work, *The Originality of Text-Critical Symbols in Codex Vaticanus* [here](#). Interestingly, an umlaut appears next to the phrase "τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες" in Vaticanus. Payne briefly discusses and seemingly dismisses the significance of the umlaut in 1 John 5:7 (p. 112, footnote 34), but without a doubt the umlaut is there. The following is a scanned image of 1 John 5:6-8 in Vaticanus:



The following is a screen capture of the transcription of the above from the [official digitized Nestle-Aland on the University of Munster Institute website](#). The image below can be viewed by selecting 1 John 5:7 in "B - 03 (Vaticanus)" and selecting "view by page":



θῦ· 6 ουτος εστιν ο ελθων
 δι υδατος και αιματος
 ις χς ουκ εν τω υδατι
 μονω αλλ εν τω υδατι
 και εν τω αιματι· και
 το πνευμα τιν το μαρ
 τυρουν οτι το πνευμα
 εστιν η αληθεια 7 οτι
 τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουν
 τες· 8 το πνευμα και
 το υδωρ και το αιμα·
 και οι τρεις εις το εν εισιν·

There is clearly an umlaut in the margin of verse 7 indicating a textual variant. The only significant textual variant here is the Comma.

1 John 5:6 was corrupted early

Did you know?

Early Greek manuscripts of 1 John 5:6, the verse preceding the Comma, are corrupt.

1 John 5:6 is the verse immediately preceding the Comma. Among those who parrot the statement that "none of the earliest manuscripts contain the Comma," perhaps only a few of them are aware that the verse immediately preceding the Comma is corrupt in these early manuscripts. The earliest witnesses of the passage are Codices Sinaiticus (4th century), Vaticanus (4th century), Alexandrinus (5th century) and 0296 (6th century). Uncial 048 (5th century) is lacunae. There are semantically significant discrepancies among these early witnesses at 1 John 5:6:

ESV (agreeing with Nestle-Aland 27):

"⁶ This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ⁷ For there are three that testify: ⁸ the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree."

Nestle-Aland 27:

"⁶ ουτος εστιν ο ελθων δι υδατος και αιματος ιησους χριστος ουκ εν τω υδατι μονον αλλ εν τω υδατι και εν τω αιματι και το πνευμα εστιν το μαρτυρουν οτι το πνευμα εστιν η αληθεια ⁷ οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες ⁸ το πνευμα και το υδωρ και το αιμα και οι τρεις εις το εν εισιν"

Vaticanus (4th c.):

"⁶ ουτος εστιν ο ελθων δι υδατος και αιματος ις χς ουκ εν τω υδατι μονω αλλ εν τω υδατι και εν τω αιματι· και το πνευμα τιν το μαρτυρουν οτι το πνευμα εστιν η αληθεια ⁷ οτι ··τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες· ⁸ το πνευμα και το υδωρ και το αιμα· και οι τρεις εις το εν εισιν·"

Sinaiticus (4th c.):

"⁶ ουτος εστιν ο ελθων δια υδατος και αιματος και πνς ις χς ουκ εν τω υδατι μονον αλλ εν τω υδατι και τω αιματι και το πνα εστιν το μαρτυρουν οτι το πνα εστιν η αληθεια ⁷ οτι οι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες ⁸ το πνα και το υδωρ και το αιμα και οι τρεις εις το εν εισιν"

Alexandrinus (5th c.):

"⁶ ουτος εστιν ο ελθων δι υδατος και αιματος και πνς ις χς· ουκ εν τω υδατι μονον· αλλα εν τω υδατι και εν τω πνι· και το πνα εστιν το μαρτυρουν· οτι το πνα εστιν η αληθεια ⁷ οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες· ⁸ το πνα και το υδωρ και το αιμα και οι τρεις εις το εν εισιν"

0296 (6th c.):

6 ουτος ε[στι]ν ο ελθων [δι] υδατος και [π]νς· και αιμα[το]ς ις χς· ουκ [εν] τω υδατι – [αιμα]τ[ι] [κ]αι το [πνα] εστιν το [μαρ]τυρουν· οτι το πνα εστι[ν] η αληθεια· ⁷ οτ[ι] τρεις οι μαρτυρουντε[ς] ⁸ το πνα και το υδωρ και το αιμα· και οι τρεις [ει]ς τ[ο] εν [εισιν]

Here we see that only Vaticanus among the early uncials agrees with Nestle-Aland 27. Vaticanus says that Jesus Christ came by "water and blood". Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus say that Jesus Christ came by "water and blood and Spirit". 0296 even has "Spirit" before "blood". While this different word order in 0296 might initially seem trivial, it actually has deep theological implications considering that some interpret the water to mean Christ's baptism and the blood to mean Christ's crucifixion. As "water and blood" are placed in that order based on the chronological order that such elements played in Christ's life, the rearranging of "Spirit" before "blood" suggests a deliberate attempt by the corrupter to place the reference to the Spirit in the appropriate order based on the chronology of Christ's earthly ministry (Christ's baptism preceded the Spirit descending upon him). Alexandrinus further adds to the confusion by replacing "not by the water only but by the water and the blood" with "not by the water only but by the water and by the Spirit". The textual variants in verse 6 begin to increase when we include [other manuscripts and witnesses](#):

- ὕδατος καὶ αἵματος (B, K, Ψ, 049, 056, 0142, 181, 330, 451, 629, 1739*, 1881, 2127, Byz, Lect, it, vg, syrp)
- ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος (43, 241, 463, 945, 1241, 1831, 1877*, 1891)
- ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος καὶ αἵματος (P, 81, 88, 442, 630, 915, 2492, arm, eth)

- ὕδατος καὶ αἵματος καὶ πνεύματος (x, A, 104, 424c, 614, 1739c, 2412, 2495, l598m, syrh, copsa, copbo, Origen)
- ὕδατος καὶ αἵματος καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου (39, 61, 326, 1837)

The spurious inclusion of "Spirit" in these early uncials is not trivial. What it demonstrates is that scribes were prone to alter this portion of 1 John based on theological or stylistic motivations. By 350 AD this portion of 1 John 5 was already corrupt in the Greek tradition. Since verse 6 is corrupt in Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus, and verse 7 in 0296 does not have "εἰσιν," there are only two manuscripts (Vaticanus and 048) from before the 7th century which read exactly as the Byzantine/Majority Text or the Nestle-Aland from verse 6 to 7:

- "οὗτος ἐστὶν ὁ ἐλθὼν δι' ὕδατος καὶ αἵματος ἰησοῦς χριστὸς οὐκ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι μόνον ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ ὕδατι καὶ ἐν τῷ αἵματι καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα ἐστὶν τὸ μαρτυροῦν ὅτι τὸ πνεῦμα ἐστὶν ἡ ἀληθεία ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσὶν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες" (Nestle-Aland 27)
- "οὗτος ἐστὶν ὁ ἐλθὼν δι' ὕδατος καὶ αἵματος ἰησοῦς χριστὸς οὐκ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι μόνον ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ ὕδατι καὶ τῷ αἵματι καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα ἐστὶν τὸ μαρτυροῦν ὅτι τὸ πνεῦμα ἐστὶν ἡ ἀληθεία ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσὶν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες" (Byzantine/Majority Text 2000)

Critics of the Comma are almost always silent regarding these corruptions of 1 John 5:6 in the early uncials - corruptions that surely diminish the reliability of these early uncials in this portion of the text. Despite there being this textual variant involving the third person of the Trinity, none of the footnotes to 1 John 5:6 in the ESV, NIV, NASB, NRSV, NLT & HCSB mention it. Such silence only serves to protect the undeserving reputation of the so-called "earliest and best manuscripts" and does not help the casual reader who wants the truth.

1 John 5:6 was prone to corruption

Some later manuscripts show further corruption in 1 John 5:6. Where it should read, "καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα ἐστὶν τὸ μαρτυροῦν ὅτι τὸ πνεῦμα ἐστὶν ἡ ἀληθεία (And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth)", manuscript 621 (11th century) reads, "καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα ἐστὶν τὸ μαρτυροῦν ὅτι τὸ πνεῦμα ἐστὶν τὸ μαρτυροῦν καὶ ἡ ἀληθεία (And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is bearing witness and truth)". 326 (10th century) and 436 (11th/12th century) say, "καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα ἐστὶν τὸ μαρτυροῦν ὅτι τὸ πνεῦμα ἐστὶν τὸ μαρτυροῦν ὅτι τὸ πνεῦμα ἐστὶν ἡ ἀληθεία (And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is bearing witness because the Spirit is truth)" (*Novum Testamentum Graecum: Editio Critica Maior: IV Catholic Letters, Text*, 2nd Ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2013), p. 349). While these errors most likely arose from misreading the line and repeating certain phrases, the fact that such errors

arose shows that the repetitive nature of this general passage lends itself to erroneous copying (see below: [Evidence of errors by parablepses](#)).

1 John 5:8 was prone to corruption

1 John 5:8 is also corrupted in a number of late manuscripts. Where it should read, "οι τρεις εις το εν εισιν (the three agree in one)", the following witnesses read, "οι τρεις εν εισιν (these three are one)": Pseudo-Caesarius (post-6th century), 2541 (12th century), 254 original (14th century), 1067 (14th century), 1409 (14th century) (*Novum Testamentum Graecum: Editio Critica Maior: IV Catholic Letters, Text*, 2nd Ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2013), p. 350). While it could be surmised that either "εις" or "το" could drop during transmission, the drop of both letters resulting in the same phrase as in the Comma ("οι τρεις εν εισιν (these three are one)") suggests Comma influence.

1 John 2:23b was corrupted early

Did you know?

1 John 2:23b is proof that the Vulgate can sometimes be more reliable than the majority of Greek manuscripts.

We now depart from the immediate context of the Comma and turn to 1 John 2:23b, as it proves two things. First, it proves that a Trinitarian clause could be expunged from 1 John in the majority of manuscripts. Second, it proves that the Vulgate can sometimes preserve authentic readings more accurately than can the majority of Greek manuscripts. 1 John 2:23 in the King James Bible says:

"Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: *[but] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*"

"πας ο αρνουμενος τον υιον ουδε τον πατερα εχει ο ομολογων τον υιον και τον πατερα εχει"
(Textus Receptus, Beza 1598)

The second clause of this Trinitarian verse is supported by the Vulgate, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, Ephraemi, Porphyrianus and about 70 other Greek manuscripts (*Novum Testamentum Graecum: Editio Critica Maior: IV Catholic Letters, Text*, 2nd Ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2013), p. 292). Most modern translations (e.g. NIV, ESV, NASB) follow this reading.

But with there being about 517 extant Greek manuscripts of 1 John and with just over 70 manuscripts having 1 John 2:23b, the clause is a minority reading. Accordingly, the Byzantine Majority Text does not include the clause. The Majority Text says:

"Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father."

"πας ο αρνουμενος τον υιον ουδε τον πατερα εχει" (Byzantine Majority Text)

The Geneva Bible in 1557 followed the majority of manuscripts here and left out the latter clause. If a Trinitarian clause in 1 John 2:23 could be lost in the majority of Greek manuscripts, and the Vulgate can be more reliable here, it is not much of a stretch to believe that the Johannine Comma was also lost in the majority of Greek manuscripts, and preserved by the Vulgate (as will be discussed below, the Vulgate preserves the Comma). The only difference between 1 John 2:23b and the Comma could be that the Comma was deleted earlier than 1 John 2:23b.

1 John 4:3 was corrupted early

1 John 4:3 is another example of an early corruption in 1 John. 1 John 4:3 is a Trinitarian verse just like the Comma. 1 John 4:3 mentions all three Trinitarian components: "spirit", "Jesus Christ" and "God." The verse in the KJV says:

"And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

This is the reading supported by Codex Sinaiticus, one of the earliest Greek manuscripts of 1 John, and the Byzantine Majority Text:

Sinaiticus:

"και παν πνα ο μη ομολογει **ιν κν εν σαρκι εληλυθοτα εκ** του θυ ουκ εστιν και τουτο εστιν το του αντιχριστου οτι ακηκοαμεν οτι ερχεται και νυν εν τω κοσμω εστιν ηδη"

Byzantine Majority Text:

"και παν πνευμα ο μη ομολογει **ιησουν χριστον εν σαρκι εληλυθοτα εκ** του θεου ουκ εστιν και τουτο εστιν το του αντιχριστου ο ακηκοατε οτι ερχεται και νυν εν τω κοσμω εστιν ηδη"

However, 1 John 4:3 in Nestle-Aland 27, following Alexandrinus and Vaticanus and a few later manuscripts, reads:

"και παν πνευμα ο μη ομολογει τον ιησουν του θεου ουκ εστιν και τουτο εστιν το του αντιχριστου ο ακηκοατε οτι ερχεται και νυν εν τω κοσμω εστιν ηδη"

["ιησουν χριστον εν σαρκι εληλυθοτα εκ" is omitted.]

From the evidence of one of the earliest manuscripts and the majority of manuscripts,

it is reasonable to believe that 1 John 4:3 in the Textus Receptus is the correct reading. Byzantine Majority Text proponents would agree. If Sinaiticus and the Majority Text are correct here, 1 John 4:3 is further evidence that a clause in a Trinitarian verse could be expunged in the early stage of transmission.

1 John 5:13 was corrupted early

1 John 5:13 is proof that a clause in a parallel construction (such as that in the Comma) could drop out of some early manuscripts. The proof of 1 John 5:13 may not be convincing to an Alexandrian text proponent, but it should be convincing to a Byzantine text proponent. The verse in the KJV says:

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

The clause, though appearing to be redundant at first, makes perfect sense. The present-tense subjunctive phrase "that ye may believe..." expresses a wish that the action continue. John is wishing that those who currently believe on the name of the Son of God would *continue* to do so. However, the underlined words are not found in the three earliest witnesses of the verse. Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and Alexandrinus, essentially say:

"ταυτα εγραψα υμιν ινα ειδητε οτι ζωνν εχετε αιωνιον τοις πιστευουσιν εις το ονομα του υιου του θεου"

The Textus Receptus and the Byzantine Majority Text, in agreement with the fourth, fifth, and sixth earliest witnesses of the verse in its entirety, K (9th century), L (9th century), P (9th century), say:

"ταυτα εγραψα υμιν τοις πιστευουσιν εις το ονομα του υιου του θεου ινα ειδητε οτι ζωνν αιωνιον εχετε και ινα πιστευητε εις το ονομα του υιου του θεου"

Socrates of Constantinople confirms that 1 John was corrupted early

We also have the testimony of Socrates of Constantinople, a 5th century Church historian, regarding the theologically motivated corruption of 1 John. He says the following in his criticism of Nestorius:

Αὐτίκα γοῦν ἠγγόησεν, ὅτι ἐν τῇ καθολικῇ Ἰωάννου γέγραπτο ἐν τοῖς παλαιοῖς ἀντιγράφοις, ὅτι «πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ λύει τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐκ ἔστι.» Ταύτην γὰρ τὴν διάνοιαν ἐκ τῶν παλαιῶν ἀντιγράφων περιεῖλον οἱ χωρίζειν ἀπὸ τοῦ τῆς οἰκονομίας ἀνθρώπου βουλόμενοι τὴν θεότητα. Διὸ καὶ οἱ παλαιοὶ ἐρμηνεῖς αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἐπεσημήναντο, ὥς τινες εἶεν ῥαδιουργήσαντες

τὴν ἐπιστολὴν, λύειν ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν ἄνθρωπον θέλοντες· συνανείληπται δὲ ἡ ἀνθρωπότης τῇ θεότητι· καὶ οὐκέτι εἰσὶ δύο, ἀλλὰ ἓν. Τοῦτο θαρροῦντες οἱ παλαιοὶ «Θεοτόκον» τὴν Μαρίαν λέγειν οὐκ ὥκνησαν· (Historia ecclesiastica, VII:32)

Now in any event, he did not perceive that in the Catholic epistle of John it was written in the ancient copies, 'Every spirit that severs Jesus is not from God.' For the removal of this [passage] out the ancient copies are understandably by those who wished to sever the divinity from the human economy. And thus by the very language of the ancient interpreters, some have corrupted this epistle, aiming at severing the humanity from the divinity. But the humanity is united to the divinity, and are not two, but one. Knowing this, the ancients did not hesitate to call Mary 'Theotokos'. (Translation by KJV Today)

A curious point is that Socrates refers to a variant reading of 1 John 4:3 that does not exist anywhere in the extant body of Greek manuscripts. Yet this reading appeared somewhat widespread in Socrates' day. This lends credence to the theory that the readings in the majority of manuscripts of 1 John may not be representative of the readings which existed in the early church. Furthermore, Socrates refers to the words of some "ancient interpreters" who observed the corruption of this epistle for theological motives. Not only that, these corruptions relate to the Trinity and the hypostatic union of Jesus.

The variants at 1 John 5:6, 1 John 2:23b, 1 John 4:3 and 1 John 5:13, and Socrates' testimony demonstrate that 1 John underwent early corruption. These examples are related to the Comma in one way or another. Some of these examples concern the Trinity. Others concern the omission of a clause in a parallel construction. Thus the extant body of early Greek manuscripts is a shaky foundation on which to determine the correct reading of the text of 1 John 5 in the 21st century. God promised to preserve his words for all generations, but God never promised to preserve the most ancient copies of his words. Given that we do have the Comma preserved for us in Greek today in relatively few and late manuscripts, other considerations should be given weight to determine its authenticity.

Latin Vulgate and Old Latin

"Quoniam tres sunt, qui testimonium dant in cælo:
Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus Sanctus:
et hi tres unum sunt."

(Clementine Vulgate)

The Comma appears in most Latin manuscripts, which are broadly classified into two groups: The Latin Vulgate & The Old Latin. The Latin Vulgate, translated by Jerome, is the more

common Latin translation as it was commissioned by the Catholic church in the late 4th century. The Old Latin is a term used to describe the various Latin translations that existed before the Latin Vulgate. Old Latin translations were made since about the latter half of the 2nd century (F. H. A. Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the New Testament Textual Criticism*, 4th Ed., Vol. 2, (New York: George Bell & Sons, 1894), p. 43).

The oldest Latin manuscript having 1 John 5 is Codex Fuldensis or manuscript F from the mid-6th century. This is a Vulgate version and does not contain the Comma. However, Codex Frisingensis, or manuscript r or 64 (6th-7th century), contains the full text of the Comma. Codex Legionensis, or manuscript l or 67 (7th century) contains the Comma with slight variation in wording (Nestle-Aland: *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th revised edition (2006)). These two are of the Old Latin versions. Thus Latin manuscripts with and without the Comma exist from around the same time. Furthermore, Codex Fuldensis, dated 546 AD, contains the *Prologue to the Canonical Epistles*, purported to be by Jerome himself, which mentions the Trinitarian Comma in John's first epistle:

"Quae si ut ab eis digestae sunt ita quoque ab interpretaetibus fideliter in latinum eloquium verterentur nec ambiguitatem legentibus facerent nec sermonum se varietas inpueraret illo praecipue loco ubi de unitate trinitatis in prima iohannis epistula (the place where it concerns the Trinity in the first epistle of John) positum legimus in qua est ab infidelibus translatoribus multum erratum esse fidei veritate conperimus trium tantummodo vocabula hoc est aquae sanguinis et spiritus in ipsa sua editione potentes et patri verbique ac spiritus (Father, the Word, and Spirit) testimonium omittentes."

While the text of 1 John 5:7 in Fuldensis does not have the Comma and critics dismiss Jerome's authorship, the Comma was certainly known to an Italian scribe who wrote the *Prologue* as early as in 546 AD.

19th century textual critic F.H.A. Scrivener estimated that "49 out of 50 [Vulgate] manuscripts testify to this disputed Comma" (F. H. A. Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the New Testament Textual Criticism*, 4th Ed., Vol. 2, (New York: George Bell & Sons, 1894), p. 403). The line between Vulgate and Old Latin manuscripts is blurry because scribes often incorporated Old Latin readings into the Vulgate. The Clementine Edition of the Vulgate, published in 1592, sought to standardize the Vulgate text, and it includes the Comma. There were other revisions of the Vulgate in the 16th century, such as those of the Complutensian Polyglot and Erasmus, which even consulted Greek manuscripts. The medieval Latin church was apparently cognizant of the controversy surrounding the authenticity of the Comma, as is demonstrated by the following excerpt from Canon 2 of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215:

"For the faithful of Christ, he says, are not one in the sense that they are some one thing that is common to all, but in the sense that they constitute one Church by reason

of the unity of the Catholic faith and one kingdom by reason of the union of indissoluble charity, as we read in the canonical Epistle of St. John: "There are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one" (I John 5: 7). And immediately it is added: "And there are three who give testimony on earth, the spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three are one" (I John 5: 8), as it is found in some codices." ([*The Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, 1215*](#))

Latin manuscripts can reliably preserve authentic readings. For example, the Vulgate preserved the reading, "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father" at 1 John 2:23 even while the Byzantine Majority Text failed to preserve it. Moreover, there is no basis to deride the Textus Receptus for including the Comma based on Latin support. Modern translators follow the similar practice of departing from the majority Hebrew readings and following the Latin when it comes to ascertaining correct Old Testament readings. The NIV and the ESV include a sentence in Psalm 145:13 that does not appear in the majority of Hebrew manuscripts. The extra sentence is included simply because it is deemed to fit well structurally and it has the support of one Masoretic manuscript, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, Syriac, and *Vulgate*. Furthermore, the NIV in Genesis 4:8 has Cain saying to Abel, "Let's go out to the field" based on the Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, *Vulgate*, and Syriac. No Hebrew manuscript (not even the Dead Sea Scrolls) has this reading in Genesis 4:8. The NIV, ESV and NASB in 1 Chronicles 4:13 add "and Meonothai" from the Vulgate despite its absence in the Hebrew. The NIV, ESV and NASB in 2 Chronicles 15:8 add "Azariah the son of" from the Vulgate despite its absence in the Hebrew. Thus there is a consensus that Latin readings can be reliable at times.

The Vulgate reading has no preposition

All Vulgate readings of 1 John 5:7, with or without the Comma, testify for the early existence of the Comma. Comma-free editions of the Vulgate read:

"Quia tres sunt qui testimonium dant: Spiritus et aqua et sanguis et tres unum sunt."

This is the reading of Codex Fuldensis, one of the oldest Vulgate manuscripts from the 6th century. It is odd for the Vulgate to have "tres unum sunt" because this is actually a translation of "τρεῖς ἐν εἰσιν" in the Comma rather than of "τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἐν εἰσιν" in verse 8. The Greek in verse 8 has the preposition "εἰς". The inclusion of "εἰς" ("in" in Latin) completely changes the sense of the passage. Later editions of the Vulgate have resupplied the preposition. The 20th century Nova Vulgata has "tres in unum sunt" and John Calvin's Latin translation has "tres in unum conveniunt". There is no reason why a translation of "τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἐν εἰσιν" in verse 8 should omit the preposition unless the wording of verse 8 was influenced by the wording of the Comma. Thus the Comma has left its mark in all Vulgate editions.

Greek fathers knew of the Comma

A good number of Greek fathers were aware of the Comma:

Athanasius

By "Athanasius", it is meant Athanasius (c. 296 – 373 AD) or Pseudo-Athanasius (c. 350 - c. 600 AD). Athanasius quoted the Comma in *Disputatio Contra Arium*:

"Τί δὲ καὶ τὸ τῆς ἀφέσεως τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν παρεκτικὸν, καὶ ζωοποιὸν, καὶ ἁγιαστικὸν λουτρὸν, οὗ χωρὶς οὐδεὶς ὄψεται τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν, οὐκ ἐν τῇ τρισμακαρίᾳ ὀνομασία δίδεται τοῖς πιστοῖς; Πρὸς δὲ τούτοις πᾶσιν Ἰωάννης φάσκει· «Καὶ οἱ τρεῖς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν.»"

"But also, is not that sin-remitting, life-giving and sanctifying washing [baptism], without which, no one shall see the kingdom of heaven, given to the faithful in the Thrice-Blessed Name? In addition to all these, John affirms, 'and these three are one.'" (Translation by KJV Today)

[ONLINE LINK to *Disputatio Contra Arium*](#)

The quote, "Καὶ οἱ τρεῖς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν", is likely from the Comma rather than verse 8 because it lacks "εις (in)". This somewhat hesitant tagging of the Comma at the end of the statement is consistent with the Comma being a minority reading in the early Greek church. The Comma, though worth quoting, was not the crux of Athanasius' argument.

Athanasius quoted another portion of the Comma in *Quaestiones Aliae*:

"Ὡςπερ ἡ ψυχὴ μου μία ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τρισυπόστατος, ψυχὴ, λόγος, καὶ πνοή· οὕτω καὶ ὁ Θεὸς εἷς ἐστίν, ἀλλ' ἐστὶ καὶ τρις ὑπόστατος, Πατὴρ, Λόγος, καὶ Πνεῦμα ἅγιον.... Ὡς γὰρ ψυχὴ, λόγος καὶ πνοὴ τρία πρόσωπα, καὶ μία φύσις ψυχῆς, καὶ οὐ τρεῖς ψυχαί· οὕτω Πατὴρ, Λόγος καὶ Πνεῦμα ἅγιον, τρία πρόσωπα, καὶ εἷς τῇ φύσει Θεὸς, καὶ οὐ τρεῖς θεοί."

"Even as my soul is one, but a triune soul, reason, and breath; so also God is one, but is also triune, Father, Word, and Holy Ghost.... For as soul, reason and breath are three features, and in substance one soul, and not three souls; so Father, Word and Holy Ghost, [are] three persons, and one God in substance, and not three gods." (Translation by KJV Today)

[ONLINE LINK to *Quaestiones Aliae*](#)

Those who claim that Athanasius did not quote the Comma elsewhere need to consider that Athanasius also did not quote Matthew 28:19 in some of his most pro-

Trinitarian writings such as *The Deposition of Arius*, *Apologia Contra Arianos* and the *Four Discourses Against the Arians*. Matthew 28:19 provides the second most clearest declaration of the Trinity after the Comma, yet Athanasius used other scriptures to support his views on the Trinity. Athanasius was not necessarily interested in establishing the Trinity per se, but rather the consubstantial unity of the Father and the Son. Other texts were more appropriate for this goal. The later Latin Fathers are the ones who were influenced by Neo-Platonic thought and sought to formulate the relationship of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost in a neatly arranged Trinity.

Origen

Origen (c. 184 - c. 253 AD) or Pseudo-Origen quoted the Comma in *Selecta in Psalmos* (PG XII, 1304):

"Ἰδοὺ ὡς ὀφθαλμοὶ δούλων εἰς χεῖρας τῶν κυρίων αὐτῶν, ὡς ὀφθαλμοὶ παιδίσκης εἰς χεῖρας τῆς κυρίας αὐτῆς, οὕτως οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ἡμῶν πρὸς Κύριον Θεὸν ἡμῶν, ἕως οὗ οἰκτερῆσαι ἡμᾶς, κ. τ. έ. Δοῦλοι κυρίων Πατὴρ καὶ Υἱὸς πνεῦμα καὶ σῶμα· παιδίσκη δὲ κυρίας τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἡ ψυχὴ. Τὰ δὲ τρία Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν ἐστίν· οἱ γὰρ τρεῖς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν."

"Behold, the eyes of bondservants in the hands of their lord, as the eyes of a bondwoman in the hands of their lady, so are our eyes towards the Lord our God, until he may pity us; spirit and body are the bondservants of the Lord Father and Son; but the soul is the bondwoman of the lady Holy Spirit. And the Lord our God is three, for the three are one." (Translation by KJV Today)

[ONLINE LINK to *Selecta in Psalmos*](#)

The quote "οἱ γὰρ τρεῖς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν" is cited as an authority ("γὰρ") for the Trinity. Thus it bears the mark of a scriptural allusion.

Gregory of Nazianzus

Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 329 - 390 AD) cites the Comma in the vocative case in the following doxology at the end of *Oration 45: The Second Oration on Easter*:

"Εἰ δὲ καταλύσαιμεν ἀξίως τοῦ πόθου, καὶ δεχθείημεν ταῖς οὐρανίαις σκηναῖς, τάχα σοι καὶ αὐτόθι θύσομεν δεκτὰ ἐπὶ τὸ ἅγιόν σου θυσιαστήριον, ὦ Πάτερ, καὶ Λόγε, καὶ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον· ὅτι σοὶ πρέπει πᾶσα δόξα, τιμὴ, καὶ κράτος, εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν."

"But if we are to be released, in accordance with our desire, and be received into the Heavenly Tabernacle, there too it may be we shall offer You acceptable Sacrifices upon Your Altar, to

Father and Word and Holy Ghost; for to You belongs all glory and honour and might, world without end. Amen." (English translation at [New Advent](#))

ONLINE LINK to [Oration 45: The Second Oration on Easter](#)

The points supporting this as a citation or at least an allusion to the Comma are as follows:

- The context is with respect to the "Heavenly Tabernacle", namely, God as revealed in heaven. This mirrors the context of the Comma in which the Father, Word, and Holy Ghost are said to be heavenly witnesses.
- In this same document at chapter IV, Gregory refers to the Trinity in its usual formula as follows: "And when I say God, I mean Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; for Godhead is neither diffused beyond These, so as to introduce a mob of gods, nor yet bounded by a smaller compass than These, so as to condemn us for a poverty stricken conception of Deity, either Judaizing to save the Monarchia, or falling into heathenism by the multitude of our gods." After stating emphatically that by God he means "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost", it is curious that he would end the same document with a different atypical formula if it were not an import from an established source.
- The context is ripe with scriptural allusions, namely to the "Heavenly Tabernacle" (Revelation 8:3), "Sacrifices upon Your Altar" (Revelation 15:5: "της σκηνης του μαρτυριου εν τω ουρανω"), and "glory and honour and might, world without end" (Revelation 5:13: "η τιμη και η δοξα και το κρατος εις τους αιωνας των αιωνων"). In this scripturally pregnant context, one must be in a state of denial to suppose that "Father and Word and Holy Ghost" alone is not a scriptural allusion.
- Furthermore, these scriptural allusions at this last portion of Gregory's oration are all from the Johannine corpus, which makes it more likely that "Father and Word and Holy Ghost" is also from that same corpus.
- In *Oration 31*, Gregory of Nazianzus had commented on the unconventional grammar of 1 John 5:6-8 in manuscripts without the Comma (as explained [above \[LINK\]](#)). As is typical among theologians, Gregory's comment may have elicited a debate concerning the unconventional grammar and possible reasons/solutions. Given the Comma existed in the Latin West at this time, it is likely that after composing *Oration 31* and prior to composing *Oration 45*, Gregory had been made aware of the Comma as a possible solution to the grammatical anomaly. This is where Gregory may have committed the unique Trinitarian wording of the Comma to memory so as to make an allusion to it in *Oration 45*.

John Chrysostom

John Chrysostom (c. 349 – 407 AD) wrote *Adversus Judaeos* (Homily 1:3) in which he used the following curious phrase:

"Κάτω τρεῖς μάρτυρες, ἄνω τρεῖς μάρτυρες, τὸ ἀπρόσιτον τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ δόξης δηλοῦντες."

"Three witnesses below, three witnesses above, showing the inaccessibility of God's glory."
(Translation by KJV Today)

[ONLINE LINK to *Adversus Judaeos*](#)

Chrysostom is not speaking about the Trinity in the context. He is merely saying that a good number of witnesses testify concerning the ineffable nature of God. Still, it is interesting that Chrysostom would give weight to his argument by using the formula of having three witnesses below and three witnesses above ("above" is to be understood as "heaven", as he previously stated, "ἀλλ' ἀνέβην εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν" ("But I went up to heaven [figuratively]"). Since the Comma was already cited in the Latin Church during Chrysostom's time, it is far more candid to suppose that a learned teacher such as Chrysostom knew of the Comma and was alluding to its formula than to suppose that he formulated it by his own imagination.

Pseudo-Chrysostom quotes the Comma in the vocative case in *De Cognitione Dei et in Sancta Theophania* as follows:

"Ἄλλ', ὦ Πάτερ, καὶ Λόγε, καὶ Πνεῦμα, ἡ τρισυπόστατος οὐσία, καὶ δύναμις, καὶ θέλησις, καὶ ἐνέργεια, ἡμᾶς τοὺς ὁμολογοῦντάς σου τὰς ἀσυγχύτους καὶ ἀδιαίρετους ὑποστάσεις, ἀξιώσον καὶ τῆς ἐκ δεξιῶν σου στάσεως, ἡνίκα ἔρχῃ ἐξ οὐρανῶν κρῖναι τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ· ὅτι πρέπει σοι δόξα, τιμὴ καὶ προσκύνησις, τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ Υἱῷ καὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι, νῦν καὶ αἰεὶ, καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων."

"But, O Father, and Word, and Spirit, the triune being and might and will and power, deem us, who confess you as the unconfused and indivisible substance, also worthy to be the ones standing at your right hand when you come from heaven to judge the world in righteousness, for rightly yours is the glory, honor, and worship, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and for always, and for eternity." (Translation by KJV Today)

[ONLINE LINK to *De Cognitione Dei et in Sancta Theophania*](#)

Pseudo-Chrysostom first refers to the Trinity as Father, Word, and Spirit and then switches to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the same sentence. This switch has no contextual reason. Given the abundance of scriptural allusions in this passage, it is most likely that the two forms of the Trinity are both scriptural allusions (Matthew 28:19 & 1 John 5:7).

Zacharias Rhetor

Zacharias Rhetor (born c. 465 AD) was a bishop of Mytilene. He cited the Comma in the vocative case as follows in *Disputatio De Mundi Opificio* (PG LXXXV, 1141):

"Ὁ Δεσποτα καὶ Δημιουργε τοῦδε τοῦ παντός, ὦ Πατερ, καὶ Λογε, καὶ Πνεῦμα ἅγιον, ὦ Θεῖα Τριάς, καὶ τριση καὶ ἁγία μονάς."

"The Lord and Creator of all things, O Father, and Word, and Holy Ghost, the Divine Trinity, both threefold and holy unity." (Translation by KJV Today)

[ONLINE LINK to PG LXXXV](#) (see page 1141)

Not only are the persons of the Trinity named according to the wording of the Comma, the following clause, "both threefold and holy unity" mirrors the Comma's "there are three... and the three are one".

Andrew of Crete

Andreas Cretensis (born c. 635) was an archbishop of Crete. He cites the Comma in the vocative case in *Magnus Canon* (PG XCVII, 1345):

"Ὑπεραρχιε, συμμορφε, πανσθενεστατὴ Τριάς ἁγία Πατερ, Λογε, Πνεῦμα ἅγιον· θεε, Φῶς, καὶ Ζωή, φυλάττε τὴν ποιμνὴν σου."

"O High Ruler, O conformed, all powerful holy Trinity: O Father, Word, Holy Ghost, O God, Light, and Life, guard your flock."

[ONLINE LINK to Magnus Canon](#)

John of Damascus

John of Damascus (c. 675 - 749 AD), though born Syrian, wrote treatises as well as hymns in Greek. He wrote the following line in *Carmina et Cantica: In Dominicam Pascha* (PG XCVI, 844):

"Πατερ παντοκράτορ, καὶ Λογε, καὶ Πνεῦμα, τρισὶν ἐνιζόμενῃ ἐν ὑποστάσεσι φύσιν, υπερουσιε καὶ υπερθεε, εἰς σε βαπτισμεθα, καὶ σε εὐλογούμεν αἰ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας."

"O Omnipotent Father, and Word, and Spirit, three persons [yet] in nature one substance, highest essence and highest divinity, in you [we are] baptized, and you we bless always and forever." (Translation by KJV Today)

[ONLINE LINK to *Carmina et Cantica: In Dominicam Pascha*](#) (see page 844)

The influence of the Comma is strong here given the context. John of Damascus names the Trinity in the vocative case as “Father, and Word, and Spirit” and says in these persons “[we are] baptized”. This expression is rather unusual if it were not for the influence of the Comma; for Matthew 28:19 is the seminal passage linking the Trinity to baptism; and there we are commanded to baptize in “the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”. Only the Comma, which names the Father, Word, and Holy Ghost as witnesses, provides a scriptural basis for baptizing in these three names. In accordance with the Comma, John of Damascus declares the “Father, and Word, and Spirit” and immediately follows with the three in one principle.

Ignatius of Antioch

The longer version of *The Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians* might have an allusion to the Comma. While the longer version is considered to be an interpolation from after Ignatius' death, scholars date it to the 4th century - which is still early enough for the allusion to be noteworthy. For the sake of this discussion, the author will be called "Ignatius". The text reads:

"ἐπεὶπερ καὶ εἷς ἀγέννητος, ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, καὶ εἷς μονογενὴς υἱός, θεὸς λόγος καὶ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ εἷς ὁ παράκλητος, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας,"

(the above Greek excerpt corresponds to the underlined portion below)

"I have confidence of you in the Lord, that ye will be of no other mind. Wherefore I write boldly to your love, which is worthy of God, and exhort you to have but one faith, and one [kind of] preaching, and one Eucharist. For there is one flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ; and His blood which was shed for us is one; one loaf also is broken to all [the communicants], and one cup is distributed among them all: there is but one altar for the whole Church, and one bishop, with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow-servants. Since, also, there is but one unbegotten Being, God, even the Father; and one only-begotten Son, God, the Word and man; and one Comforter, the Spirit of truth; and also one preaching, and one faith, and one baptism; and one Church which the holy apostles established from one end of the earth to the other by the blood of Christ, and by their own sweat and toil; it behoves you also, therefore, as "a peculiar people, and a holy nation," to perform all things with harmony in Christ." ([Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1, "The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus", Edited by Alexander Roberts, D.D. & James Donaldson, LL.D.](#))

[ONLINE LINK to *The Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians*](#)

The entire passage is an expanded exposition of Ephesians 4:1-7. The following chart shows how each portion of Ephesians 4:1-7 gave rise to each portion of Ignatius' exposition:

Ephesians 4:1-7	Ignatius to Philadelphians
<p>¹ I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, ² With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; ³ Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.</p>	<p>I have confidence of you in the Lord, that ye will be of no other mind. Wherefore I write boldly to your love, which is worthy of God, and exhort you to have but one faith, and one [kind of] preaching, and one Eucharist.</p> <p><i>(This portion mirrors Ephesians 4:1-3 in exhorting believers to maintain unity; and what follows explains the basis of this unity.)</i></p>
<p>⁴ There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;</p>	<p>For there is one flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ; and His blood which was shed for us is one; one loaf also is broken to all [the communicants], and one cup is distributed among them all: there is but one altar for the whole Church, and one bishop, with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow-servants.</p> <p><i>(This portion expands the meaning of "body" as understood in its various interpretations and applications)</i></p>
<p>⁵ One Lord,</p>	<p><u>Since, also, there is but one unbegotten Being, God, even the Father; and one only-begotten Son, God, the Word and man; and one Comforter, the Spirit of truth;</u></p> <p><i>(This portion expounds the "One Lord" of Ephesians 4:5 as referring to the threefold "Father... Word... Spirit".)</i></p>
<p>⁵ one faith, one baptism,</p>	<p>and also one preaching, and one faith, and one baptism;</p> <p><i>(This portion seems to reference Romans 10:17 "faith cometh by hearing" and adds "one preaching" as a precursor to "one faith"; which results in "one baptism".)</i></p>
<p>⁶ One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. ⁷ But</p>	<p>and one Church which the holy apostles established from one end of the earth to the other by the blood</p>

unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.	of Christ, and by their own sweat and toil; it behoves you also, therefore, as "a peculiar people, and a holy nation," to perform all things with harmony in Christ. <i>(This concluding portion refers to God's grace enabling believers to edify the Church by their various giftings.)</i>
<i>(Ephesians 5-6 provide instructions for wives, husbands, children, and servants.)</i>	<i>(The passage continues with Ignatius exhorting wives, children, servants, and husband to follow these instructions in Ephesians 5-6.)</i>

The reference to the "Father... Word... Spirit" in Ignatius' epistle is most likely an allusion to the Comma for the following reasons:

- "Father... Word... Spirit" is a Trinitarian formula unique to the Johannine Comma.
- By cross-referencing the "One Lord" statement of Ephesians 4:5 to the Trinity of "the Father... Word... Spirit", Ignatius carries over the meaning of the Comma, namely, that there are "the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost" and "these three are one."
- The order of the descriptions of the three persons of the Trinity suggests a deliberateness in alluding to the Comma. First, the "one unbegotten Being, God" is listed, and it is further clarified that this is "even **the Father**". Then the "one only-begotten Son, God" is listed and further clarified that this is "**the Word** and man (an allusion to the parallelism between 1 John 5:7 and 1 John 5:8)". Lastly the "one Comforter" is listed and further clarified that this is "**the Spirit** of truth" (an allusion to 1 John 5:6). Each person of the Trinity is first identified and the immediately following clarifying title always mirrors the wording of the Comma. It would have been typical for "the Father" to be associated with "the Son" (with both terms indicating the relationship between each other) as clarifying titles to the first and second persons of the Trinity. However, what we have in Ignatius is an atypical grouping of "the Father" with "the Word":

	First title	Second title
1st person of the Trinity	"unbegotten being"	" the Father "
2nd person of the Trinity	"only-begotten Son"	" the Word and man"
3rd person of the Trinity	"Comforter"	" the Spirit of truth"

- All the attributes which Ignatius gives to "the Father... Word... Spirit" are found in the context of the Comma.

- Ignatius refers to the unbegotten nature of the Father and the begotten nature of the Son. This echoes 1 John 5:1 which says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him."
 - The distinction between the heavenly "Word" and the earthly humanity of the Son ("man") is laid out in 1 John 5:6-8. In fact, 1 John 5:7-8 first refers to the Son as the "Word" and then refers to his humanity characterized by "the water, and the blood".
 - While the reference to the Parakletos (comforter, advocate) is found farther back in 1 John 2:1, the reference to the "Spirit of truth" is found in 1 John 5:6 and 1 John 4:6. There is no question that John 15:26 is the closer reference of the Comforter being the Spirit of truth, but the Epistle of First John is not far off.
 - There are countless other attributes and titles that Ignatius could have ascribed to "the Father... Word... Spirit" from scripture, but his restriction to those found in the context of the Comma suggests an allusion to it.
- Ignatius is careful to expand the meaning of Ephesians 4:1-7 from close scriptural allusions. This suggest the expansion of the "One Lord" in verse 5 is also a close scriptural allusion.

Latin fathers quoted/alluded to the Comma more often than the Greek fathers. The earliest citations of the Comma provide only the portion which reads, "these three are one". However, this is the only relevant portion to cite in a Trinitarian argument for the consubstantial unity of the Godhead since the Comma quoted in its entirety would only prove that the Godhead is united in testimony, not essence (more on this later).

Tertullian

Tertullian (c. 155 - c. 245 AD) makes a truncated reference to the Comma:

"Ita connexus Patris in Filio et Filii in Paracleto, tres efficit coharentes, alterum ex altere, qui tres unum sunt, non unus, quomodo dictum est, Ego et Pater unum sumus." (*Against Praxeas* XXV).

"Thus the connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Paraclete, produces three coherent persons, one from the other, which three are one, not one [person], as it is said, "I and my Father are One."" (Translation by KJV Today)

Some translations in English obscure Tertullian's reference to the Comma. Tertullian makes the truncated reference, "tres unum sunt" and argues for the consubstantial unity of the Father and the Son with the reference to John 10:30. He did not quote the Comma fully because a full quotation has "the Word" instead of "the Son".

Furthermore, Tertullian alludes to the Comma in *De Baptismo*:

"Not that in the waters we obtain the Holy Spirit; but in the water, under (the witness of) the angel, we are cleansed, and prepared for the Holy Spirit. In this case also a type has preceded; for thus was John beforehand the Lord's forerunner, preparing His ways. Thus, too, does the angel, the witness of baptism, make the paths straight for the Holy Spirit, who is about to come upon us, by the washing away of sins, which faith, sealed in (the name of) the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, obtains. For if in the mouth of three witnesses every word shall stand: — while, through the benediction, we have the same (three) as witnesses of our faith whom we have as sureties of our salvation too— how much more does the number of the divine names suffice for the assurance of our hope likewise! Moreover, after the pledging both of the attestation of faith and the promise of salvation under three witnesses, there is added, of necessity, mention of the Church; inasmuch as, wherever there are three, (that is, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,) there is the Church, which is a body of three." (English translation by [New Advent](#))

Here Tertullian is alluding to two Trinitarian passages: Matthew 28:19 ("Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:") and 1 John 5:7 ("For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."). It is significant that he does not explicitly quote Matthew 28:19, because that means we have no reason to expect him to quote 1 John 5:7 explicitly. It is obviously that Matthew 28:19 is alluded because the issue concerns baptism in the name of the Trinity. However, Matthew 28:19 alone falls short of describing the Trinity as "three witnesses" concerning "the attestation of faith and the promise of salvation". This is a matter described in 1 John 5 verse 7 to 12.

Cyprian

Cyprian (c. 210 - 258 AD) quotes the Comma:

"Dicit Dominus, Ego et Pater unum sumus; et iterum de Patre et Filio et Spiritu sancto scriptum est: 'Et tres unum sunt.'" (*Treatise* I:6).

"The Lord says, "I and the Father are one; " and again it is written of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, "And these three are one."

While some might argue that Cyprian was giving a theological spin to 1 John 5:8, Cyprian clearly says "scriptum est" (it is written). As with Tertullian, Cyprian would not have given the full quotation because the Comma has "the Word" instead of "the Son". In *De Rebaptismate* (15 and 19) Pseudo-Cyprian appears to quote 1 John 5:8 without the Comma. However, this writer is not the actual Cyprian.

Phoebadius

Phoebadius in 359 AD quotes the Comma:

"Sic alius a Filio Spiritus; sicut alius a patre Filius. Sic tertia in Spiritu ut in Filio secunda persona, unus tamen omnia quia tres unum sunt" (*Contra Arianos* XXVII: 4)

"The other Spirit comes from the Son just as the other Son comes from the Father. So the Spirit is the third as the Son is the second person. But the sum is one, for the three are one."

Priscillian

Priscillian of Avila in c. 380 AD quotes the Comma:

"Sicut Ioannes ait: Tria sunt quae testimonium dicunt in terra: aqua caro et sanguis; et haec tria in unum sunt et tria sunt quae testimonium dicunt in caelo: pater, verbum et spiritus; et haec tria unum sunt in Christo Iesu." (*Liber Apologeticus*, I.4)

"As John says, "There are three that give testimony in earth: the water, the flesh and the blood; and these three are one and there are three that give testimony in heaven: the Father, the Word and the Spirit; and these three are one in Christ Jesus." (Translation by KJV Today)

The order of verse 7 and 8 is reversed, but the Comma nonetheless existed by 350 AD, which is the date of the earliest Greek manuscripts against the Comma (e.g. Sinaiticus and Vaticanus). Some critics dismiss the significance of Priscillian's citation due to the fact that he was considered a heretic. These critics may even go as far as to say that Priscillian forged the Comma. But Priscillian was considered a heretic because of his extreme asceticism and Manichaeism. Forging the Comma would not have helped in furthering any of these heretical beliefs.

Augustine

Augustine (354 - 430 AD) quotes the Comma in *City of God*, Book 5, Chapter 11. He writes:

"Deus itaque summus et verus cum Verbo suo et Spiritu sancto, quae tria unum sunt, Deus unus omnipotens, creator et factor omnis animae atque omnis corporis,"

"Therefore God supreme and true, with His Word and Holy Spirit (which three are one), one God omnipotent, creator and maker of every soul and of every body;"
(English translation by [New Advent](#))

The significance of this passage is the use of "His Word" to refer to the second person of the Trinity followed by "and Holy Spirit" and the phrase "which three are one". Such a formula appears only in the Comma.

Some people believe that Augustine did not know of the Comma because he made a mystical Trinitarian interpretation of 1 John 5:8 in *Contra Maximinum* (II:22:3), written sometime around 427 AD, without overtly referring to the Comma. In this very construed interpretation, Augustine saw the Spirit as signifying the Father, the blood as signifying the Son, and the water as signifying the Holy Ghost. Even if Augustine appeared to be hesitant to regard the Comma as Scripture in *Contra Maximinum* in 427 AD, he appeared to be aware of the Comma in 410 AD. So his change in view could be attributed to him "switching his translation" later in life. In fact, Augustine's quote of 1 John 5:8 in *Contra Maximinum* is not from the Vulgate. The quote reads:

"Sane falli te nolo in Epistola Ioannis apostoli, ubi ait: Tres sunt testes; spiritus, et aqua, et sanguis; et tres unum sunt."

The Vulgate should read, "Tres sunt qui testimonium dant". It appears that Augustine is making his own translation from the Greek, which did not have the Comma in the majority of manuscripts at this point in time. Augustine's policy was to turn to the Greek whenever there were variants in the Latin. He said: "As to the books of the New Testament, again, if any perplexity arises from the diversities of the Latin texts, we must of course yield to the Greek, especially those that are found in the churches of greater learning and research" (*On Christian Doctrine*, II:15). Augustine's neglect of the Comma in *Contra Maximinum* may prove that the Comma was already expunged in the Greek, but it does not prove the lack of the Comma in the Latin. Besides, it sure is curious that Augustine would make such a construed interpretation of the Spirit, water, and blood if it were not for him being influenced by the parallelism of the Comma earlier in life.

Vigilius Tapsensis

North African Bishop Vigilius Tapsensis quotes the Comma in *Contra Varimadum* in c. 450 AD and three times in Books 1 and 10 of *De Trinitate Libri Duodecim* in c. 480 AD:

Contra Varimadum:

"Item ipse ad Parthos: Tres sunt, inquit, qui testimonium perhibent in terra, aqua, sanguis et caro, et tres in nobis sunt. Et tres sunt qui testimonium perhibent in ceolo, Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus, et ii tres unum sunt." (*Contra Varimadum*, Book I, Chapter 5 (MPL062, col. 359))

“Also to the Parthians, ‘There are three’, He says, ‘that bear record in earth, the water, the blood and the flesh, and the three are in us. And there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one.’” (Translation by KJV Today)

De Trinitate Libri Duodecim:

“Ergo quamvis in superioribus exemplis Scripturarum tacita sint nomina personarum, tamen unitum nomen divinitatis per omnia tibi est in his demonstratum; sicut et in hoc exemplo veritatis, in quo nomina personarum evidenter sunt ostensa, et unitum nomen divinitatis clausum est declaratum, dicente Joanne evangelista in Epistola sua: Tres sunt qui testimonium dicunt in caelo, Pater, et Verbum, et Spiritus, et in Christo Jesu unum sunt;” (*De Trinitate Libri Duodecim*, Book I (MPL062, col. 243))

“Therefore, although in the above examples the Scriptures are silent regarding the names of the persons, yet this union of the divine name by all in this is to be demonstrated to you; also as in this example of the truth, in which the names of the persons are clearly evident, and the united divine names declared closed, the Evangelist John says in his Epistle: ‘There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, and the Word, and the Spirit, and they are one in the Lord Jesus Christ;’” (Translation by KJV Today)

Victor Vitensis

Victor bishop of Vita in c. 485 AD cited the Comma as representing the testimony of John the evangelist in a dispute with Huneric the Vandal:

“Et ut adhuc luce clarius unius divinitatis esse cum Patre et Filio Spiritum sanctum doceamus, Joannis evangelistae testimonio comprobatur. Ait namque: Tres sunt qui testimonium perhibent in caelo, Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus sanctus, et his tres unum sunt.” (*Historia persecutionis Africanae Provinciae*, Book III, Chapter XI (MPL058, col. 227))

“And in order to show with clearer light that the unity of divinity is with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, John the evangelist bears record. For which it is said: ‘There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one.’” (Translation by KJV Today)

Fulgentius Ruspensis

Fulgentius bishop of Ruspe in North Africa (died 527 AD) cited the Comma, even referring to Cyprian’s citation of the same:

Responsio Contra Arianos Libri Duo:

“In Patre ergo et Filio et Spiritu sancto unitatem substantiae accipimus, personas confundere non ademus. Beatu enim Joannes apostolus testatur, dicen: Tres sunt qui testimonium perhibent in

caelo, Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus; et tres unum sunt. Quod etiam beatissimus martyr Cyprianus, in epistola de Unitate Ecclesiae confitetur, dicens: Qui pacem Christi et concordiam rumpit, adversus Christum facit; qui alibi praeter Ecclesiam colligit, Christi Ecclesiam spargit. Atque ut unam Ecclesiam unius Dei esse monstraret, haec confestim testimonia de Scripturis inseruit. Dicit Dominus: Ego et Pater unum sumus. Et iterum: De Patre et Filio et Spiritu sancto scriptum est: Et tres unum sunt.” (*Responsio Contra Arianos Libri Duo*, Response 10 (MPL065, col. 224))

In the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, whose unity of substance we accept, are confident not to confound the persons. For the blessed John the Apostle testifies, saying: ‘There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit; and the three are one. This is also confessed by the most blessed martyr Cyprian in the letter On the Unity of the Church, saying: ‘He who breaks the peace and concord of Christ, he does against Christ’, who in another place says in addition to a collection of the Church, says, ‘scatters the Church of Christ’. And in order to show that there is one Church of the one God, he immediately inserted this into the testimonies of the Scriptures: ‘The Lord says: I and the Father are one. And again: of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit it is written: ;And the three are one.’” (Translation by KJV Today)

Ad Felicem Notarium De Trinitate Liber Unus:

“En habes in brevi alii esse Patrem, alium Filium, alium Spiritum sanctum: alium et alium in persona, non aliud et aliud in natura; et idcirco Ego, inquit, et Pater unum sumus. Unum, ad naturam referre nos docei, Sumus, ad personas. Similiter et illud: Tres sunt, inquit, qui testimonium dicunt in caelo, Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus, et his tres unum sunt.” (Ad Felicem Notarium De Trinitate Liber Unus, Chapter IV (MPL065, col. 500))

“Here you have briefly that another is the Father, another is the Son, another is the Holy Spirit: different in person, not different in nature: and for this reason ‘I’, he says, ‘and the Father are one.’ We teach that ‘One’ refers to nature, and ‘We are’ refers to the persons. Likewise regarding it: ‘There are three’, he says, who are said to testify in heaven, ‘the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one.’” (Translation by KJV Today)

Cassiodorus

Cassiodorus of Italy (c. 485 - c. 585 AD) cited the Comma in *Complexiones In Epistollis Apostolorum*:

“Cui rei testificantur in terra tria mysteria: aqua, sanguis et spiritus, quae in passione Domini leguntur impleta: in caelo autem Pater, et Filius, et Spiritus sanctus; et hi tres unus est Deus.” (*Complexiones In Epistollis Apostolorum*, Epistolam S. Joannis ad Parthos, Chapter X (MPL070, col. 1373))

“This matter the three mysteries testify in earth: ‘the water, the blood, and the spirit’, which are fulfilled as we read in the Passion of the Lord: but in heaven ‘the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one God’. (Translation by KJV Today)

Ephrem the Syrian

Ephrem the Syrian was a 4th century theologian writing in Syriac in Assyria. He wrote:

"The daring men try to escape men's notice [when pretending] that they baptize in the Three Names. Now at the mouth of Three the judges decide. See here be Three Witnesses Who put an end to all strife! And who would doubt about the holy Witnesses of His Baptism?" (*Eighty Rhythms upon the Faith, against the Disputers*, 28:7, translated into English by Rev. J. B. Morris, *Select Works of S. Ephrem the Syrian* (Oxford:, 1847), p. 196).

[ONLINE LINK to *Eighty Rhythms upon the Faith, against the Disputers*](#)

While scriptures other than the Comma could account for the theological truths expounded by Ephrem, his naming of the "Three Names" as "Three Witnesses" seems based on the wording of the Comma. Only the Comma refers to the Three Names, Father, Word, and Holy Ghost, as Three Witnesses.

Like the Vulgate, the Syriac Peshitta has a trace of the Comma

[In a similar vein to those Vulgate manuscripts without the Comma](#), early manuscripts of the Syriac Peshitta do not have the Comma but nonetheless retain a trace of the Comma in verse 8 (or verse 7 depending on the versification), which begins with "ܐܡܢܝܢ" (Thomas Burgess, *In Further Proof of the Authenticity of 1 John*, v. 7 (London: Brodie and Dowding, 1829), p. 56):

ܐܡܢܝܢ ܐܡܢܝܢ ܐܡܢܝܢ ܐܡܢܝܢ ܐܡܢܝܢ ܐܡܢܝܢ ܐܡܢܝܢ ܐܡܢܝܢ ܐܡܢܝܢ ܐܡܢܝܢ

"And there are three that testify, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three are in one." (J. W. Etheridge)

"And there are three to bear witness, the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three are one." (George M. Lamsa)

"And there are three witnesses, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three are in union." (James Murdock)

The phrase "And there are..." at 1 John 5 appears only in Bibles with the Comma. This is because the clause immediately following verse 6 is introduced with "For there are..." (whether with or without the Comma). The phrase "And there

are...." follows the Comma only if the Comma exists. In Bibles without the Comma the only phrase should be "For there are....":

"οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες, το πνευμα και το υδωρ και το αιμα, και οι τρεις εις το εν εισιν." (Nestle-Aland 27)

"For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree." (ESV)

There is no reason why the Syriac should translate the Greek causal conjunction "οτι" as the copulative Waw (ܐ) conjunction. The Syriac translates "οτι" as "because" in just the previous verse and also at 1 John 5:4. The phrase "οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες" obviously introduces a "cause" or "reason" for the antecedent phrase. The Syriac appears to be translated from a Greek manuscript which contained "και τρεις εισιν", which is a vestige of the Comma. Although this manuscript apparently did not contain the Comma and the mention of "in earth", it nonetheless contained a trace of the Comma. The oldest Syriac manuscript which contains 1 John is from the 5th century (British Library, Add. 14470).

"⁶ This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. ⁷ For there are three that bear record [*in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.* ⁸ *And there are three that bear witness in earth*], the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. ⁹ If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son." (1 John 5:6-9, the Comma identified in bracketed italics)

Given the early corruption of the text of 1 John, the internal evidence for the Comma should be given greater weight. The internal evidence for the Comma is strong.

Comma-absent readings lack an explicit explanation of the "witness of God"

1 John 5:6 says "it is the Spirit that beareth witness" and yet 1 John 5:9 refers to the "witness of God". A Trinitarian might automatically equate "the Spirit" with "God" but such a logical leap is not warranted in the context of 1 John 5. In the context of John chapter 5, "God" refers to the Father. 1 John 5:1 says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him." Since Jesus Christ is born of the Father, this "God",

namely "him that begat", must refer to the Father. When verse 9 says that if we receive the witness of men, the witness "of God" is greater, this "God" must mean the "Father". But without the Comma, there is no reference to the Father ever giving witness. When the Comma is included, we see the Father providing witness in union with the Spirit.

Johannine appeal to the witness of the Father

Following up with the previous point, in John's Gospel we find recurring instances of the Father bearing witness of Jesus Christ:

- John 5:37: "And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape."
- John 8:18: "I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me."

As our Lord Jesus often appealed to the witness of the Father as the highest authority, without such reference to the Father as one of the witnesses of Jesus Christ, the passage in 1 John 5 is theologically hollow and deficient. Including the Comma is more agreeable to the Joannine appeal to the witness of the Father.

Comma-absent readings give rise to an unbiblical doctrine

Verse 6 declares that the Spirit is truth. This is shown by the fact that the Spirit is in agreement with the Father and the Word ("...το πνευμα εστιν η αληθεια οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες εν τω ουρανω ο πατηρ ο λογος και το αγιον πνευμα και ουτοι οι τρεις εν εισιν"). In other words, the Spirit is truth because it is one with the source of truth, the divine Father and the Son whose testimonies are in agreement (John 8:18). If the Comma were not present, the Spirit is purported to be truth just because it agrees with two other earthly witnesses ("...το πνευμα εστιν η αληθεια οτι τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες το πνευμα και το υδωρ και το αιμα και οι τρεις εις το εν εισιν"). However, this would hardly explain why the Spirit alone is singled out as being truth. If the unity in testimony determines whether a contributing witness is truth, then either the water or the blood could also be truth on the same level as the Spirit. The biblical principle on two or three witnesses is that *the matter* which is being testified by two or three witnesses is truth (Matthew 18:16). The contributing *witnesses* themselves are not deemed to be truth just on the basis of participating and being in agreement. The Spirit is truth in a unique sense because it is one with the Godhead, not just because it agrees with two other witnesses.

Comma-absent readings have no antecedent

Verse 8 says, "And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." In Greek, the phrase "these three agree in one" is "οἱ τρεῖς εἰς **το** ἐν εἰσιν" (the three are in **the** one). There is a definite article that indicates that the "one" is a particular "one" that has been referred to previously in the flow of the argument. If the Comma remains, this demonstrative article has a clear antecedent. The Father, Word, and Holy Ghost are "one," and the three earthly witnesses agree in "the one." Without the Comma there is no clear antecedent ("Discussions of Robert Lewis Dabney," The Banner of Truth Trust, 1967, by the Trinitarian Bible Society).

Comma-absent readings have a weaker reason for having exactly "three" witnesses

Critics of the Comma might say that 1 John 5:8 refers to three witnesses because of the biblical principle that two or three witnesses establish a matter (Matthew 18:16). While the principle of Matthew 18:16 might appear sufficient as to why there should be *at least* three witnesses in 1 John 5:8, there is otherwise no reason why the number of witnesses should be exactly three, and not more. Would it not have been more persuasive for John to list a larger number of witnesses on earth? How about other candidates such as "the scriptures", "miracles" or "the Church"? John appears to be fixated on the number three, which is best explained if the Trinitarian truth of the Comma is included. 18th century Greek New Testament scholar Johann Albrecht Bengel said:

"The heavenly Trinity, archetypal, fundamental, unchangeable, is the foundation of the triad of witnesses on earth, which conforms to it. The apostle might either have made the number of those who bear witness on earth greater; comp. ver. 9; or referred them all to one spirit; comp. ver. 6; but he reduces them to a triad, solely with reference to the three who bear witness in heaven. Because the Father, and the Word, and the Spirit, are properly three, and are bearing witness, and are one, similar things are also, by a figure, predicated of the spirit, and the water, and the blood; which things are evidently less applicable of themselves to those subjects:" (Charlton T. Lewis, *Bengel's Gnomon of the New Testament: A New Translation*, Vol 2 (New York: Sheldon & Company, 1860) p. 810).

Comma-absent readings give rise to a grammatical anomaly

Around 379 AD, Gregory of Nazianzus commented on the grammatical anomaly in 1 John 5:7-8 without the Comma. He says, "...after using Three in the masculine gender [Apostle John] adds three words which are neuter, contrary to the definitions and laws which you and your grammarians have laid down" ([*The Fifth Theological Oration. On the Holy Spirit, XIX*](#)). Gregory is referring to the grammatical mismatch that results from the masculine construction "τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες (there are three that bear witness)" introducing three neuter nouns, "το πνευμα (the Spirit)," "το υδωρ (the water)" and "το αιμα (the blood)". Although Gregory seemed to be defending the abbreviated text despite the anomaly, for such a defense to be necessary there likely were both variants in the body of Greek manuscripts.

If the Comma were included there is no grammatical problem according to the 19th century Presbyterian theologian Robert L. Dabney. First, the masculine nouns in the Comma, "the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost", would control the gender over the neuter noun "Holy Ghost". Then the repetition of the masculine construction "τρεις εισιν οι μαρτυρουντες" could "be accounted for by the power of attraction, so well known in Greek syntax..." (R. L. Dabney, *The Works of Robert L. Dabney*, (London: Banner Truth, 1967). Anti-Comma scholars have developed several of their own theories to explain away this anomaly without appealing to the Comma, but these theories fall short.

One theory is that John regarded the "Spirit" as a person, and therefore personified it by giving it the masculine gender. The problem with this theory is that "Spirit" appears in verse 6 and is not personified as it is associated with a neuter article and participle, "το πνευμα εστιν το μαρτυρουν."

Another theory by the critics is that John gave the masculine gender to the Spirit, water and blood because John wanted to indicate that they are all valid witnesses, which in Old Testament law had to be males. The problem with this theory is that, again, the Spirit is already described as a valid witness in verse 6 but is given the neuter gender there.

John and the Trinity

Trinitarian defenders of the early Church quoted John's writings the most of all the biblical writers because John's writings state the Trinitarian doctrine most clearly. John is undoubtedly the top spokesman for the doctrine of the Trinity in the Bible. We find the following Trinitarian statements in his writings:

- "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1)
- "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

- "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John 1:18)
- "I and my Father are one." (John 10:30)
- "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." (John 8:58)
- "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26)
- "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:" (John 15:26)
- "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;" (John 14:16)
- "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God." (John 20:28)
- "(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)" (1 John 1:2)
- "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also." (1 John 2:23)
- "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. (1 John 4:13-15)
- "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." (2 John 1:9)
- "John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." (Revelation 1:4-6)

As the Trinity was so important a doctrine for John that he sometimes even disrupted the natural flow of the narrative to insert a comment on the Trinity, it is very likely for John to have inserted a reference to the Trinity in the climactic passage of his first epistle (1 John 5:1-12 is considered the climax of the epistle and the closure beings to happen starting at 5:13 with the words, "These things have I written unto you...."). Furthermore, John could have stated the most complete and

systematic Trinitarian doctrine in his epistle as it was not confined within the scope of a historical narrative as was the case in John's Gospel. John referred to the Trinity in his Gospel but the concepts therein were confined by the dialogues in the narrative. For example, perhaps the strongest co-equality principle in John's Gospel is the statement, "I and my Father are one." (John 10:30). A stronger and fuller Trinitarian statement would have been, "The Father, the Holy Ghost, and I are one" but such words did not come out of our Lord's mouth because his circumstances did not concern the Holy Ghost. This means John had no basis to state the co-equality of the entire Trinity in his Gospel. However, given that the first epistle is more a theological treatise rather than narrative, John was able to declare a complete and systematic propositional statement concerning the Trinity. The Comma is just what we would expect from John in a doctrinal treatise which makes many points concerning the Trinity. On the other hand, when all the pieces to the Trinitarian doctrine are lining up in the discourse of 1 John 5 (mentioning the Father (verses 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11), the Son (verses 1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12), the Spirit (verses 6, 8), the concept of three things agreeing in one (verse 8)), John's first epistle absent the Comma would arguably be uncharacteristic of his writings which never wasted an opportunity to declare the Trinitarian doctrine.

Johannine distinction between the heavenly and earthly

The Comma should be included because it bears the marks of Johannine theology as it relates to the superiority of heavenly witnesses over earthly witnesses. John in his Gospel at John 3:12 refers to the words of our Lord who said, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" The implication is that a witness who can testify concerning heavenly matters is certainly qualified to testify concerning earthly matters. The point is that a heavenly witness is superior. Later, John writes at John 3:31-36:

"He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. **He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life:** and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:31-36)

To begin with, this Johannine passage makes a distinction between a heavenly witness and an earthly witness. A heavenly witness is shown to be far superior to any earthly witness. Second, the passage refers to the Father, the words of God* and the Spirit (*though *ρῆματα τοῦ θεοῦ* is written here instead of *λογος*, the two are undeniably related). Third, the matter of verse 36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life", is precisely the same matter

to which the witnesses in 1 John 5:7-8 attest. Compare the similar theological truths stated in John 3:31-36 and 1 John 5:7-12 with the Comma:

Similarities:

- Heaven
- Earth
- Father
- Word
- Holy Spirit

text: Witness (μαρτυρία)

text: "Life is in the Son"

1 John 5:6-12	John 3:31-36
<p>1Jn 5:7 For there are three that bear record (μαρτυρουντες) in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.</p>	<p>Joh 3:31 He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.</p> <p>Joh 3:32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth (μαρτυρει); and no man receiveth his testimony (μαρτυριαν).</p> <p>Joh 3:33 He that hath received his testimony (μαρτυριαν) hath set to his seal that God is true.</p> <p>Joh 3:34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.</p> <p>Joh 3:35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.</p>
<p>1Jn 5:8 And there are three that bear witness (μαρτυρουντες) in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.</p> <p>1Jn 5:9 If we receive the witness (μαρτυριαν) of men, the witness (μαρτυρια) of God is greater: for this is the witness (μαρτυρια) of God which he hath testified of his Son.</p>	<p>(John 3:31 has already made a comparison between heavenly and earthly witnesses. However, the three specific earthly witnesses could not have been mentioned at John 3 because the witness of "the blood" and the Holy Spirit (John 15:26) had not been introduced yet.)</p>
<p>1Jn 5:10 <i>He that believeth on the Son</i> of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar;</p>	<p>Joh 3:36 <i>He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son</i></p>

<p>because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.</p> <p>1Jn 5:11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.</p> <p>1Jn 5:12 He that hath the Son <u><i>hath life;</i></u> <u><i>and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.</i></u></p>	<p><u><i>shall not see life;</i></u> but the wrath of God abideth on him.</p>
--	---

Both John 3:31-36 and 1 John 5:7-12 refer to the same matter, which is that the life is in the Son. Hence consistency demands that the same arguments being made in John 3:31-36 should be made also in 1 John 5:7-11. Since John 3:31-36 explicitly declares the superiority of heavenly witnesses over earthly witnesses and even mentions the three heavenly witnesses,

1 John 5:7-11 would lack theological depth and consistency if the Comma were not included. If the Comma were included, 1 John 5:7-11 would be a most accurate and concise summary of the theology of John 3:31-36.

Our Lord's baptism in the Gospel of John relates to 1 John 5:6-9

The phrase "witness of men" in 1 John 5:9 has been interpreted in many ways. However, this "witness of men" might be a specific reference to John the Baptist's testimony recorded in the Apostle John's account of our Lord's baptism.

John writes at 1:32-34:

"And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." (John 1:32-34)

While Matthew, Mark and Luke also tell their versions of our Lord's baptism, only John refers to John the Baptist's "record" (or witness) that "this is the Son of God". John the Baptist bears witness and, more importantly, Father God in heaven, with the Spirit descending from above, also bears witness that Jesus is the Son of God. This may be what is meant by "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son" (1 John 5:9). This interpretation makes perfect sense in light of John 1:32-34. However, given that the heavenly witnesses are presented at John 1:32-34, the context of 1 John 5:9 makes more sense with the reference to the heavenly witnesses in the Comma.

Johannine parallelism

The repetitive contrastive parallelism of 1 John 5:7-8 is a mark of Johannine authorship. Compare the Comma with the other examples of contrastive parallelisms in the same Epistle:

- 1 John 5:7-8: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one."
- 1 John 1:8-10: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
- 1 John 12:13-14: "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one."
- 1 John 4:2b-3a: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God:"
- 1 John 5:12: "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

Why Trinitarians did not cite the Comma

A caveat with respect to argument from silence

While some Greek and Latin fathers cited the Comma, there are others who did not. Critics appeal to this argument from silence to argue against the early existence of the Comma. However, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. For example, Eusebius did not cite the Trinitarian baptismal formula of Matthew 28:19 ("...in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost") in many of his writings:

- "What king or prince in any age of the world, what philosopher, legislator, or prophet, in civilized or barbarous lands, has attained so great a height of excellence, I say not after death, but while living still, and full of mighty power, as to fill the ears and tongues of all mankind with the praises of his name? Surely none save our only Saviour has done this, when, after his victory over death, he spoke the word to his followers, and fulfilled it by the event, saying to them, **Go, and make disciples of all nations in my name**." (*Oration in Praise of Emperor Constantine*, 16:8)
- "But the rest of the apostles, who had been incessantly plotted against with a view to their destruction, and had been driven out of the land of Judea, went unto all nations to preach the Gospel, relying upon the power of Christ, who had said to them, **Go and make disciples of all the nations in my name**." (*Church History*, Book III, 5:2)

Given that all three earliest manuscripts of Matthew (Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Alexandrinus) contain the Trinitarian formula, Eusebius' silence on the Trinitarian formula does not prove its absence in the 4th century. There may be several reasons for Eusebius' silence, such as that his focus in these writings did not require the full quotation, that he preferred to paraphrase, or that his manuscripts did not have the Trinitarian formula. Likewise, the various Church fathers' silence on the Comma could have the following reasons:

1. The Comma was counterproductive in the context.
2. The Comma was not helpful in the context.
3. The Comma was not relevant in the context.
4. Silence of the Comma only proves the existence of doubt, not absence.

1) The Comma was counterproductive in the context

The earliest anti-Trinitarian heretics denied not the unity of the Trinity, but the distinctness of the persons of the Trinity. Sabellianism in the East and Patripassianism in the West denied the distinction between the Father and the Son. 3rd century fathers would not have quoted the Comma given that it could have bolstered the Sabellian argument for the oneness of the Father, Word, and Holy Ghost.

Even during the Arian controversies of the 4th century, Trinitarians may have supposed the Comma would give ammunition to those who claimed the Godhead is "one" only in terms of agreement, not essence. Given that 1 John 5:8 demonstrates the oneness of the Spirit, water and the blood only in terms of agreement, not essence, drawing attention to the Comma and its context could have undermined the Trinitarian view of the Godhead.

2) The Comma was not helpful in the context

In some cases, the Comma might not have been counterproductive but nonetheless unhelpful. For one thing, the context of the Comma has been unclear to many expositors. The identity of the water and blood in 1 John 5:6-8 has been interpreted as follows by different commentators:

- 1) Jesus' baptism and death. (Tertullian)
- 2) Jesus' incarnation. (Johann J. Wettstein)
- 3) Water and blood which poured out from Jesus' side at his crucifixion. (Augustine)
- 4) The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper. (Matthew Henry)
- 5) Faith and the public acknowledgment of it. (Clement of Alexandria)

As with the case even today, the early Church did not have a common interpretation of the context surrounding the Comma. Without having a common understanding of the context, the Comma is hardly a useful proof text.

The greatest threat to Trinitarian orthodoxy was the heresy of Arianism. Yet the Comma is not an effective proof text against this heresy. The Comma, naming the Word as the second person of the Trinity, does not prove the consubstantial unity of the Father and the incarnate Son, which was the controversy brought by Arianism. The Comma speaks only of the unity of the Father and the Word, which was never ambiguous given the "and the Word was God" declaration in John 1:1.

Moreover, Athanasius does not quote even the Trinitarian formula at Matthew 28:19 in any of his writings other than in *De Synodis*. Matthew 28:19 has the second clearest statement on the triadic structure of the Trinity ("...in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"). Yet Athanasius argued against Arianism in *The Deposition of Arius*, *Apologia Contra Arianos* and the *Four Discourses Against the Arians* all without referring to Matthew 28:19. Athanasius could have cared less about the triadic structure of the Trinity because he argued for the consubstantial unity of the Father and the Son. The Comma became more useful in the later centuries to develop the structure of the Trinity as being a triad, but the Comma, as with Matthew 28:19, was not essential as far as Athanasius was concerned in the 4th century.

3) The Comma was not relevant in the context

The Comma was irrelevant to the topics of many of the fathers. Novatian, Hilary of Poitiers and Ambrose are counted as witnesses against the Comma but they had not need to cite the Comma.

Novatian (255 AD) in *On the Trinity* does not quote the Comma for two reasons. First, Novatian's argument on the Trinity focuses on Christ's divinity in his incarnate state (chapters 13-16, 21-25) as well as his theophanic state (chapters 17-19). The Johannine Comma says nothing about the incarnation or the manifestation of the Deity. Second, he argues against the

Sabellians (chapters 26-28). The Comma, interpreted a certain way, could actually bolster the Sabellian view of the oneness of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is significant that Novatian does not even quote Matthew 28:19, the second clearest statement on the triadic structure of the Trinity ("...in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"). If Novatian did not need to cite Matthew 28:19, he probably did not need to cite the Comma either.

Hilary of Poitiers (360 AD) in *On the Trinity* quotes John 10:30 heavily but not the Comma because his task to the Arians is to expound that the Son is God, not to argue for the Holy Spirit. He says, "Concerning the Holy Spirit I ought not to be silent, and yet I have no need to speak" (Book II). John 10:30 would have been the only proof text that Hilary needed if he were trying to prove that Jesus is God, and did not want to confuse the argument by introducing the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the Comma only proves the unity of testimony between the Father and the Word, not the unity in substance of the Father and the Son. Hilary explicitly says in *De Synodis* that he is not interested in a creed that merely supports the unity of agreement among the persons of the Trinity: "31. Perhaps this creed has not spoken expressly enough of the identical similarity of the Father and the Son, especially in concluding that the names Father, Son and Holy Ghost referred to the Person and order and glory of each of those who are named to teach us that they are three Persons, but in agreement one (per substantiam tria, per consonantiam vero unum)."

Ambrose (380 AD) had no reason to refer to the Comma in his reference to 1 John 5:8 because he was explaining baptism, not the Trinity. Ambrose did not even give direct quotations of 5:8 in any of his writings. He writes in *On the Holy Spirit* (Book I, 6:77): "Et ideo hi tres testes unum sunt, sicut Ioannes dixit: Aqua, sanguis, et Spiritus. Unum in mysterio, non in natura." He writes in *On the Mysteries* (4:20): "Ideoque legisti quod tres testes in baptismo unum sunt, aqua, sanguis, et Spiritus; quia si in unum horum detrahas, non stat baptismatis sacramentum." So Ambrose's references to 1 John 5:8 do not reveal what Ambrose's Bible text actually said.

4) Silence of the Comma only proves the existence of doubt, not absence

A Church father's silence on the Comma does not prove that the Comma did not exist at the time. Even today, many prominent Trinitarian apologists would not quote the Comma even though it is present in perhaps half of the printed English Bible translations in existence (with the KJV, NKJV and the Amplified Bible having the Comma). Practically all English translations have the Comma if we include the margins (e.g. NIV, NASB, though not the ESV). Thus silence on the Comma by a preacher today is not due to its absence but rather motivated by a majority consensus of its spuriousness. Many Christians today consider the Comma as an embarrassing case of fabricating a proof-text for the Trinity. Prominent atheists and Muslims have tried to cast doubt on the Bible by referencing the Comma. For many Christians today, the Comma is something best forgotten and only the uneducated are considered to rely on it for doctrine. Early Church fathers may have shared this same sentiment. The manuscript evidence demonstrates that the text of 1 John 5 had

been tampered with at an early stage. Thus it is likely that early Church fathers lacked confidence in the integrity of the text of 1 John 5. Even if a good number of manuscripts with the Comma came down through the ages, it may have appeared even back then to be a pious addition to prove the Trinity. The general lack of confidence in its authenticity would have dissuaded most fathers from using it for establishing doctrine.

Demonstrable mechanisms for omission

Now that it has been established that the Comma does have early witnesses, albeit in a minority situation, we turn to the issue of *why* and *how* the Comma came to be omitted among the majority of manuscripts at such an early stage. Bruce M. Metzger said that if the Johannine Comma were original, there is no good reason to account for its omission, either accidentally or intentionally, by copyists of hundreds of Greek manuscripts and by translators of ancient versions (Bruce M. Metzger. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. Second Edition. 1994, p. 647-649.). In response to Metzger's claim, there are indeed a number of good reasons for the omission of the Comma.

Evidence of errors by parablepses

The Comma could have been omitted by way of parablepsis due to the homoeoteleuton in the passage. "Homoeoteleuton" refer to consecutive lines with similar endings. Homoeoteleuton can cause an error called haplography, where only one line is written instead of both. This error is caused by parablepsis, a situation in which a careless scribe jumps from the ending of the first line to the similar ending of the second line. It is not mere speculation to theorize that the Comma was removed by parablepsis. The possibility of this theory is substantiated by the fact that even the so-called "most reliable manuscripts" omit significant portions of text by parablepses.

1 John 2:23b

As discussed previously, 1 John 2:23b was omitted in the early stage of transmission. It can be shown that 1 John 2:23b was omitted because of a homoeoteleuton - the repetition of the same endings.

Textus Receptus (Beza 1598), Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, etc. read:

"πας ο αρνουμενος τον υιον ουδε τον πατερα εχει ο ομολογων τον υιον και τον πατερα εχει"

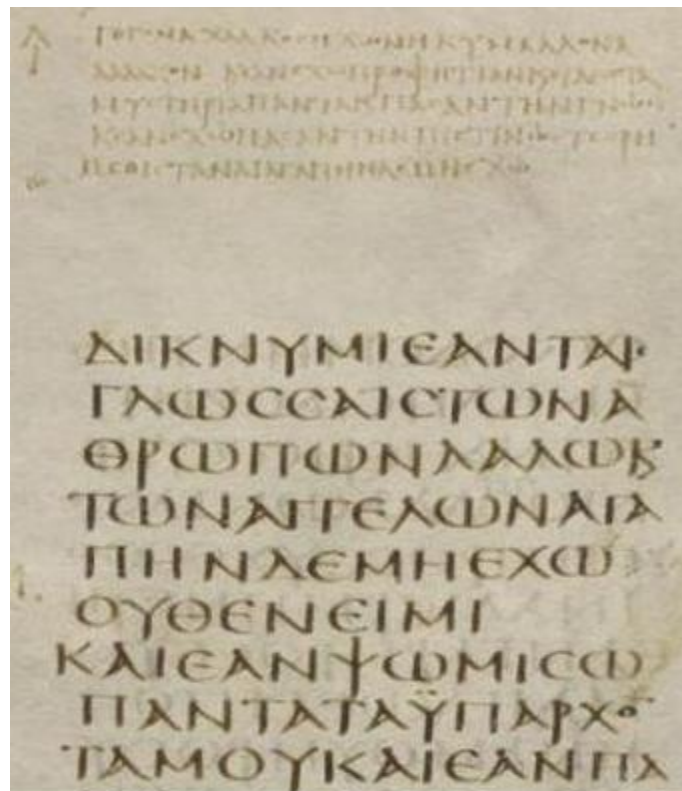
The Byzantine Majority Text reads:

"πας ο αρνουμενος τον υιον ουδε τον πατερα εχει" (Byzantine Majority Text)

The omission arose when a scribe who finished copying the first "τον πατερα εχει" jumped to the end of the second "τον πατερα εχει" and resumed copying from there, thereby omitting everything in between.

1 Corinthians 13:1-2

Codex Sinaiticus, the earliest witness against the Comma, omits a total of 32 Greek words at 1 Corinthians 13:1-2 due to a homoeoteleuton.



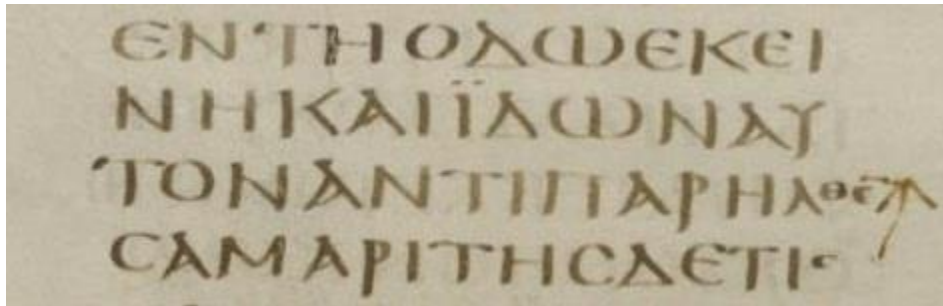
1 Corinthians 13:1-2 in Codex Sinaiticus

(Source: The Codex Sinaiticus Project Website: <http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/>)

The text should read, "εαν ταις γλωσσαις των ανθρωπων λαλω και των αγγελων αγαπην δε μη εχω γενονα χαλκος ηχων η κυμβαλον αλααζον και εαν εχω προφητειαν και ειδω τα μυστηρια παντα και πασαν την γνωσιν και εαν εχω πασαν την πιστιν ωστε ορη μεθιστανειν αγαπην δε μη εχω ουδεν ειμι " but the scribe of Sinaiticus omitted the underlined words. When the scribe finished copying the first "αγαπην δε μη εχω", his eyes jumped to the second "αγαπην δε μη εχω" and resumed copying from there. A later scribe inserted the omitted words in the top margin.

Luke 10:32

Codex Sinaiticus exhibits this same type of error again at Luke 10:32.



Luke 10:32 in Codex Sinaiticus

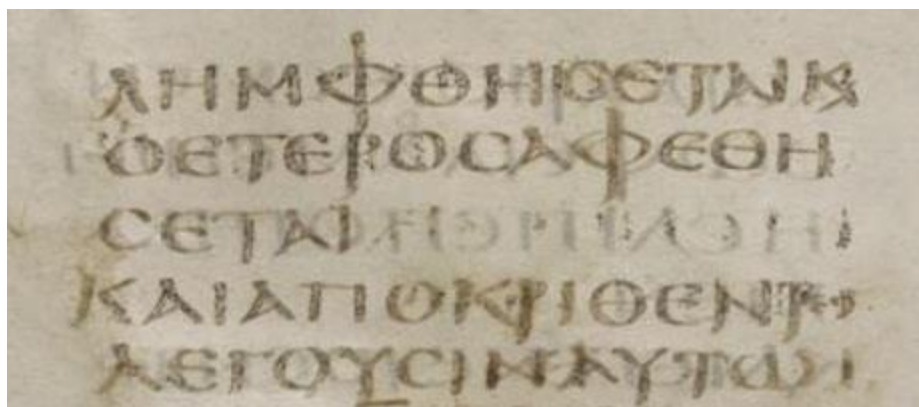
(Source: The Codex Sinaiticus Project Website: <http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/>)

Here, the scribe omitted all of verse 32 by skipping the words in between the "αντιπαρηλθεν" at the end of verse 31 and the "αντιπαρηλθεν" at the end of verse 32:

"κατα συγκυριαν δε ιερευσ τις κατεβαινεν εν τη οδω εκεινη και ιδων αυτον αντιπαρηλθεν ομοιως δε και λευιτης γενομενος κατα τον τοπον ελθων και ιδων αντιπαρηλθεν σαμαρειτης δε τις οδευων ηλθεν κατ αυτον και ιδων αυτον εσπλαγχνισθη" (Luke 10:31-33)

Luke 17:35

The scribe of Codex Sinaiticus made the same mistake at Luke 17:35 and omitted the entire verse:



Luke 17:35 in Codex Sinaiticus

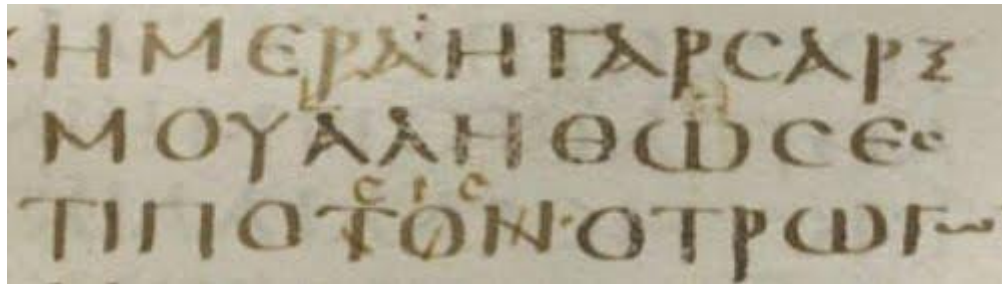
(Source: The Codex Sinaiticus Project Website: <http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/>)

Here the following underlined words were omitted because "αφεθησεται" appears twice:

"λέγω υμιν ταυτη τη νυκτι εσονται δυο επι κλινης μιας ο εις παραληφθησεται και ο ετερος αφεθησεται εσονται δυο αληθουσαι επι το αυτο η μια παραληφθησεται η δε ετερα αφεθησεται" (Luke 17:34-35)

John 6:55

The scribe of Codex Sinaiticus does it again at John 6:55:



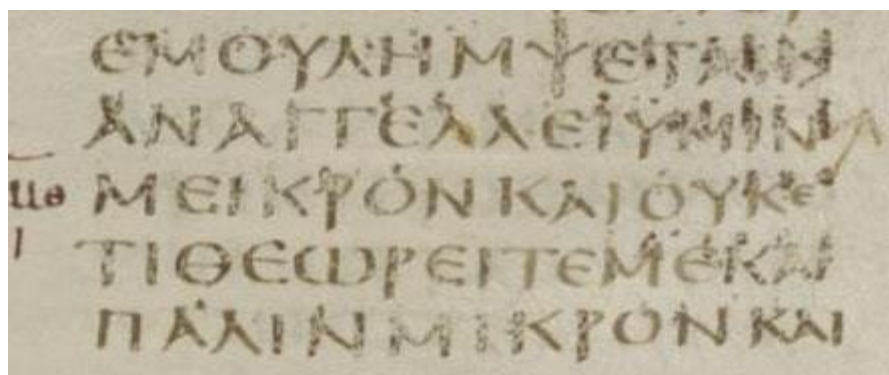
John 6:55 in Codex Sinaiticus

(Source: The Codex Sinaiticus Project Website: <http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/>)

This passage ought to say, "η γαρ σαρξ μου αληθως εστιν βρωσις και το αιμα μου αληθως εστιν ποσις (For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed)." However, Sinaiticus reads, "η γαρ σαρξ μου αληθως εκ τι ποσις" (For my flesh is drink indeed)." This nonsensical reading arose when the scribe skipped everything in between the first "αληθως" and the second "αληθως".

John 16:15

The scribe of Codex Sinaiticus does it yet again at John 16:15:



John 16:15 in Codex Sinaiticus

(Source: The Codex Sinaiticus Project Website: <http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/>)

The scribe skipped the following underlined words of John 16:15 due to the homoeoteleuton:

"εκεινος εμε δοξασει οτι εκ του εμου ληψεται και αναγγελει υμιν παντα οσα εχει ο πατηρ εμα εστιν δια τουτο ειπον οτι εκ του εμου ληψεται και αναγγελει υμιν μικρον και ου θεωρειτε με και παλιν μικρον και οψεσθε με οτι εγω υπαγω προς τον πατερα" (John 16:14-16)

We have seen that Codex Sinaiticus omits at least 4 entire verses due to a homoeoteleuton. This should be enough to cause us to rethink the idea that the earliest manuscripts = the most reliable manuscripts.

Luke 14:27

Luke 14:27 in some manuscripts is another example of an omission due to a homoeoteleuton. Verses 26 and 27 share the same endings:

- Luke 14:26 "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."
- Luke 14:27 "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

Several manuscripts, M (9th century), R (6th century), Γ (10th century) and others (al mu) omit the entire verse 27. A scribe accidentally omitted verse 27 because when he finished copying "ου δυναται μου μαθητης ειναι" in verse 26 his eyes jumped to the same phrase in verse 27. See the critical apparatus of Tischendorf's 8th Edition for the manuscripts with this omission:

27. Versum om $\mathfrak{M}^* \text{B}^{\Gamma}$ al mu | $\text{o}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$ sine copula cum $\mathfrak{K}^* \text{L}$ cop (accedit B^* : quod enim habet $\text{o}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma \text{o}\upsilon\upsilon$, vitiose pro $\text{o}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma \text{o}\upsilon$ scriptum est, etsi $\text{B}^{\delta} \text{o}\upsilon$ ad $\text{o}\upsilon\upsilon$ addidit. Item accedit aeth, qui quod praecedit, $\text{o}\upsilon \delta\upsilon\upsilon$. $\epsilon\iota. \mu. \mu\alpha\theta.$, cum $\text{o}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$ conjg; antea „odio habeat“ etc.) Contra nil probat Ir ex Valent¹⁶: $\epsilon\upsilon \tau\omega \epsilon\iota\pi\epsilon\iota\upsilon$ · $\text{o}\sigma \text{o}\upsilon \beta\alpha\sigma\tau\alpha\zeta\epsilon\iota$ etc, nec Or^{int}¹², ⁴⁷⁷ „dicit: *Qui non tollit*“ etc ... $\varsigma \text{Ln Ti kai o}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$ (D Ir¹⁶ $\text{o}\sigma$) cum $\mathfrak{M}^{\text{CA}}(\text{D})\chi\lambda\lambda\eta \text{unc}^{\theta}$ al fere omn a b c f \mathfrak{H}^2 · l q vg (e et si) syr^{cu} et utr ... 157. arm $\text{o}\sigma\tau.$ $\gamma\alpha\rho$ | $\beta\alpha\sigma\tau\alpha\zeta\epsilon\iota$: F al^{2scr} - $\alpha\sigma\epsilon\iota$ | $\epsilon\alpha\iota\tau\omicron\upsilon$ c. $\text{ABL}^2\mathfrak{M}^2\Delta$ al¹⁰ ... $\varsigma \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ c. $\mathfrak{N}\text{DL}\eta \text{unc}^{\theta}$ al pler Basbapt⁶²⁸: ut Mt | $\epsilon\rho\chi\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$: $\kappa\eta$ al⁷ Basbapt $\alpha\kappa\omicron\lambda\omicron\upsilon\theta\epsilon\iota$ (item Ir¹⁷ sed $\alpha\kappa\omicron\lambda.$ $\mu\omicron\iota$ pro $\epsilon\rho\chi.$ $\omicron\pi.$ $\mu.$) :: ex Mt | $\epsilon\iota\upsilon.$ $\mu\omicron\upsilon \mu\alpha\theta.$ cum $\mathfrak{M}\text{B}\epsilon\text{F}\text{G}\text{H}\text{L}\text{S}\text{V}\chi\lambda\lambda$ al³⁰ fere b e f q am² for go Basbapt ... D (a Ir^{int}¹⁷) $\text{tol } \mu\omicron\upsilon \mu\alpha\theta.$ (a Ir^{int} *disc. meus*) $\epsilon\iota\upsilon\alpha\iota$... $\varsigma \text{Ln } \mu\omicron\upsilon \epsilon\iota\upsilon.$ $\mu\alpha\theta.$ cum $\mathfrak{A}\mathfrak{K}\mathfrak{M}^2\text{UH}$ al plu c \mathfrak{H}^2 · vg (et. am^{*}). Libere Ir¹⁷ ex Valent¹⁶ $\mu\alpha\theta\eta\tau.$ $\epsilon\mu\omicron\sigma \text{o}\upsilon \delta\upsilon\upsilon\alpha\tau.$ $\gamma\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\sigma\theta.$ Cf et. (quae magis a Mt pendent) Or^{3,625} $\text{o}\sigma \alpha\upsilon \mu\eta \alpha\rho\eta \tau\omicron\upsilon \sigma\tau\alpha\upsilon\rho\omicron\upsilon \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon \text{kai } \alpha\kappa\omicron\lambda\omicron\upsilon\theta\eta\sigma\eta \omicron\pi\iota\sigma\omega \mu\omicron\upsilon, \text{o}\upsilon\kappa \epsilon\sigma\tau\iota \mu\omicron\upsilon \alpha\zeta\iota\omega\sigma \epsilon\iota\upsilon\alpha\iota \mu\alpha\theta\eta\tau\eta\sigma.$

1 John 5:13

1 John 5:13 was discussed earlier above. In the Byzantine text, two clauses have the phrase, "εις το ονομα του υιου του θεου". Although it is more difficult to explain how the error arose here than in the other examples with homoeoteleutons, the error most likely did arise due to the homoeoteleuton. An Alexandrian text proponent may not be convinced of an error here, but a Byzantine text proponent must believe that an omission occurred in the Alexandrian copies. So this example in 1 John 5:13 is relevant in persuading at least a Byzantine text proponent that a line in 1 John chapter 5 that has a repetition of similar words was omitted, whether intentionally or accidentally.

Homoeoteleuton at 1 John 5:6-8

As in the other passages where words were carelessly omitted, the text of 1 John 6 to 8 also contains many repetitions of the same words. The corruptions of 1 John 5:6 seen in Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus involve the word "πνευμα." It is not surprising that scribes would accidentally add this word because it appears 4 times in just 3 verses from 5:6 to 5:8 (3 times in just 2 verses even if we omit the Comma). Scribes would essentially be "juggling" many appearances of the word in a span of just a few lines. The frequency of the appearance of "πνευμα" from 5:6 to 5:7 could confuse a careless scribe.

Due to the many repetitions of similar words in 1 John 5:6-8, it would not be unreasonable to suppose that a scribe omitted the Comma by accident. If the Comma appeared originally, the text could have been laid out as follows:



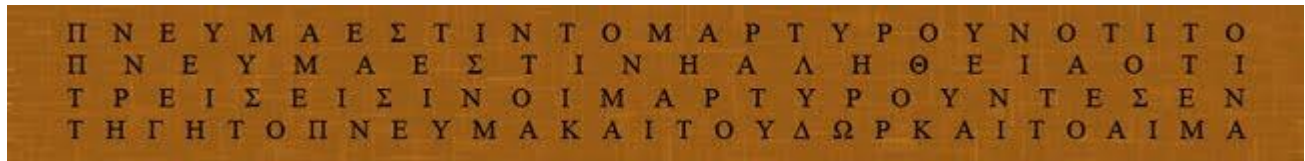
The portion above is from the end of 1 John 5:6 to the middle of 1 John 5:8. It corresponds to the portion in the KJV which reads:

"...Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood:"

The text is arranged in a manner that is typically seen in papyri. Even if the words on an actual papyrus were not arranged exactly in the same positions on the papyrus as in this hypothetical arrangement, the relative positions of the words would still be similar. Consider how the phrase "τρεῖς εἰς ἑνὶ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν" appears twice identically, separated by two lines, and how the word "πνεῦμα" is located above that phrase in both instances at the left-hand side of the papyrus (the phrase is underlined):



Due to the identical appearance of the phrase in 5:7 and 5:8, the eyes of a scribe who is in the midst of copying a word in 5:7 could jump to the corresponding word in 5:8. Moreover, the word directly above the left-most portion of the phrase in 5:8 is "πνεῦμα," which is also the word directly above the left-most portion of the phrase back in 5:7. This could cause great confusion for a careless scribe. The text of a scribe who skipped the two lines in between would read:



This text with the omission says, "Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood:" The phrase "in earth" would remain in the new copy, but it could easily drop during further transmission. Moreover, support for "in earth" is stronger than the Comma itself. The Anchor Bible, which by no means is a friend of the Comma, says concerning the support for "in earth":

"However, in the course of Latin textual transmission, independently of the Comma, variants appeared that show that the passage was the subject of reflection and "improvement" by scribes.... For instance, Facundus of Hermiane (ca. 550) reads I John as saying, "There are three who give testimony on *earth*" (Pro Defensione Trium Capitulorum ad Isutinianum 1.3.9; CC 90A, 12; also inferior MSS. of Bede). If that addition was an older tradition, it may have facilitated the creation of the Comma with its corresponding witnesses in heaven" (*The Anchor Bible: The Epistles of John* at 778).

The author of the *Anchor Bible* interprets the support for "on earth" as a corruption which caused the creation of the Comma. However, it could also be interpreted as the vestige of a copyist error who omitted the mention of the heavenly witnesses but managed to keep the words "on earth." In fact, this interpretation is consistent with the hypothesis of the corruption of 1 John 5:7 discussed above. The suspicion that the Comma was accidentally omitted due to a homoeoteleuton is not far-fetched seeing that there are examples of such errors elsewhere in the manuscripts. The passage in 1 John 5:6-7 clearly bears features that would attract this type of copyist error.

Arian influence

If the Comma was not accidentally removed, it could have been removed intentionally by heretics. Yale professor of ecclesiastical history, Jaroslav Pelikan, notes that theologians of the past suspected that Arians expunged the Comma:

"Although the weight of the textual evidence against it was seemingly overwhelming, the proof it supplied for the Trinity made an attack on its authenticity seem to be an attack on the dogma. Therefore the Reformed theologian Johann Heinrich Heidegger, citing Jerome, and the Lutheran theologians Johann Gerhard and Johann Andreas

Quenstedt argued that the real corruption of the Greek text had been its "erasure by the fraud of the Arians," not its addition by orthodox fathers. In a lengthy disputation on the question, Gerhard marshaled the evidence of manuscripts and versions in an effort to show this, and in his systematic theology he reaffirmed its authenticity." (Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: Reformation of Church Dogma (1300-1700)* at 346)

The Orthodox remnant viewed the notorious Arians with much suspicion. Athanasius had complained of the Arians' "calumnies, imprisonments, murders, wounds, conspiracies by means of false letters" (*Apologia Contra Arianos* at 49). The hypothesis that Arians expunged the Comma is valid because it is falsifiable: the hypothesis could be proven false if the Comma does not exist even in places where Arianism did not exert early influence. However, the evidence supports the hypothesis. The Comma exists in places where Arianism was not established early, such as Spain and North Africa. Whereas Constantinople and Alexandria were infected with Arianism by the 4th century, Spain and North Africa were relatively less infected until the 5th century. Geographically, Spain and North Africa were the farthest places from the major centers of Arianism. Moreover, whereas primarily Greek and Latin speakers spread Arianism in the rest of Christendom, Spain was introduced to Arianism through Visigoths and North Africa was introduced to Arianism through Vandals. These were both Germanic tribes who used the Gothic Bible of Ulfilas. Thus Arians in Spain and North Africa had less influence on the Latin scriptures. This allowed the Comma to remain in Latin manuscripts of Spain and North Africa.

The earliest uses of the Comma are from the far West (Cyprian, Priscillian, Phoebadius, Vigilus, Victor, Fulgentius). The earliest manuscripts with the Comma are from Spain. This localization of manuscripts containing the Comma has led scholars to believe that the Comma was just an anomalous reading in an obscure part of Christendom. However, this "obscure part of Christendom" is where Arianism was not prevalent in the earlier centuries. A single generation of prolific Arian copyist activity in the early 4th century would have created a majority of copies of 1 John 5 without the Comma. Just as one Catholic man, Erasmus, popularized the inclusion of the Comma in the Greek texts of Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestants from the 16th century onward, a few scholarly Arians could have popularized the omission of the Comma in the Greek texts of both Arians and Trinitarians from the 4th century onward. The argument against the Comma, that it was included by the Latin Church because of tradition, goes both ways. If Protestants could accept the reading of a Catholic for 400 years, it is certainly within the realm of possibility for the Orthodox Greeks to accept the reading of Arians for many centuries (until the reinstatement of the Comma in the *1904 Patriarchal Text*).

Evidence of Gnostic versions of three witnesses

The Gnostic "Godhead"

Even before the spread of Arianism, Gnosticism had infected the early Church. Most scholars believe that John in his Epistles attempted to expose and refute the early Gnostic proclivities in the Church. The First Epistle would have attracted the relentless hostility of Gnostics. Valentinian Gnostics did not believe in the simple Trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They identified the God of the Old Testament as the Demiurge. They gave primacy to a feminine emanation of God who was called Sophia (Divine Wisdom). The Logos (or "Word" - one of the three witnesses in the Comma) was believed to be just one of the many Aeons (emanations of God). Surely the Comma would have been incompatible with this complicated Valentinian concept of the divine hierarchy.

The "Trinity" and "there are three" in the Secret Book of John

In fact, there is a Gnostic text called the [*Secret Book of John*](#), written before 180 AD, which subverts the orthodox Trinity. It is a fraudulent work that was not actually written by the Apostle John. In this work, the Gnostic John describes the Trinity as a trinity of Father, Mother and Son:

"There was not a plurality before me, but there was a likeness with multiple forms in the light, and the likenesses appeared through each other, and the likeness had three forms. He said to me, "John, John, why do you doubt, or why are you afraid? You are not unfamiliar with this image, are you? - that is, do not be timid! - I am the one who is with you (pl.) always. I am the Father, I am the Mother, I am the Son. I am the undefiled and incorruptible one." (Translated by Frederik Wisse for the Nag Hammadi Library)

Further into the work, the Gnostic John uses the Comma phrase, "And there are three" a total of four times to describe the number of Gnostic aeons:

"For from the light, which is the Christ, and the indestructibility, through the gift of the Spirit the four lights (appeared) from the divine Autogenes. He expected that they might attend him. And the three (are) will, thought, and life. And the four powers (are) understanding, grace, perception, and prudence. And grace belongs to the light-aeon Armozel, which is the first angel. And there are three other aeons with this aeon: grace, truth, and form. And the second light (is) Oriel, who has been placed over the

second aeon. And there are three other aeons with him: conception, perception, and memory. And the third light is Daveithai, who has been placed over the third aeon. And there are three other aeons with him: understanding, love, and idea. And the fourth aeon was placed over the fourth light Eleleth. And there are three other aeons with him: perfection, peace, and wisdom. These are the four lights which attend the divine Autogenes, (and) these are the twelve aeons which attend the son of the mighty one, the Autogenes, the Christ, through the will and the gift of the invisible Spirit. And the twelve aeons belong to the son of the Autogenes. And all things were established by the will of the holy Spirit through the Autogenes." (Translated by Frederik Wisse for the Nag Hammadi Library)

There are just too many clues here to ignore the possibility of a Gnostic corruption of the Johannine Comma:

- This Gnostic text uses the Comma phrase, "And there are three" four times.
- This Gnostic text subverts the orthodox Trinity with the Gnostic trinity of the "Father, Mother and Son".
- This Gnostic text is ascribed to "John", though falsely.

There is another ancient Gnostic work titled Allogenes which says "the three are one" with respect to the trinity of the Gnostic saviors, "Vitality, Mentality and That-Which-Is":

"And he was becoming salvation for every one by being a point of departure for those who truly exist, for through him his knowledge endured, since he is the one who knows what he is. But they brought forth nothing beyond themselves, neither power nor rank nor glory nor aeon, for they are all eternal. He is Vitality and Mentality and That-Which-Is. For then That-Which-Is constantly possesses its Vitality and Mentality, and Life has Vitality possesses non-Being and Mentality. Mentality possesses Life and That-Which-Is. And the three are one, although individually they are three." (Translated by John D. Turner and Orval S. Wintermute)

If Gnostics wrote such works (and surely they did), it is utterly inconceivable that they would have left the Johannine Comma untouched and unchallenged. Moreover, the *Secret Book of John* is a Gnostic propaganda text to redefine John's actual teachings. Gnostics often mimicked the style of the real Apostles in order to supplant their teachings. And by producing a work which redefines the members of the Trinity, uses the phrase "And there are three", and names the author of the work as "John", this *Secret Book of John* ironically proves the existence of the Johannine Comma, which alone is a Trinitarian verse in which John wrote "And there are three".

The corruption of manuscripts in Alexandria

The earliest witness of 1 John 5 is the Alexandrian Codex Sinaiticus from 350 AD. The second and third earliest witnesses are also Alexandrian and written later than 350 AD. Long before these manuscripts were written, the heresy of Gnosticism became widespread from Alexandria to Rome through the ministry of Valentinus. By 150 AD, Valentinianism was extremely popular in Alexandria. The fact that these heretics published many spurious Gospels is well documented. They most likely also corrupted the true Scriptures. With respect to the state of corruption of the manuscripts in Alexandria, Origen of Alexandria in the 3rd century said:

"...the differences among the manuscripts [of the Gospels] have become great, either through the negligence of some copyists or through the perverse audacity of others; they either neglect to check over what they have transcribed, or, in the process of checking, they lengthen or shorten, as they please."

(Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 3rd ed. (1991), pp. 151-152).

It is not far-fetched to conclude that the majority of these omissions were made by the heretical Gnostics. Although we can only speculate as to which verses the Gnostics omitted, it is reasonable to believe that the Comma was one of them. There was also an early heretical sect which denied the "Logos" (the Word). Epiphanius termed this sect the "[Alogi](#)" (Anti-Logos). The "Word" mentioned in the Comma is certainly at odds with any theology that is against the Logos.

These heretics had the motive to omit the Comma. If a large and influential sect such as the Valentinians were responsible for omitting the Comma, and if other smaller sects such as the Alogi were complicit, the Comma would have had a very rough history by 350 AD. Origen in the 3rd century would have used the standard Gnostic-influenced text-type of Alexandria. Non-Gnostic Christians in the rest of the Greek speaking world would have kept the Comma in their copies, but many of these non-Gnostics eventually became Arians in the following centuries. Assault one after another would have left the Comma with a confusing textual history by the time of Athanasius and the Orthodox Fathers. As shown earlier on this page, 1 John 6-8 indeed bears evidence of textual corruption by 350 AD. It is absolutely reasonable to suppose that 1 John 5:6-8 suffered textual corruption prior to 350 AD under the hands of heretics than to suppose that the Comma was fabricated by Orthodox Trinitarians.

Evidence of the early subversion of John's doctrines

Even before Gnosticism and Arianism, there was an arch enemy of John named Diotrephes who attempted to subvert John's doctrines. He is mentioned by name in John's Third Epistle at verses 9 to 10:

"I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church."

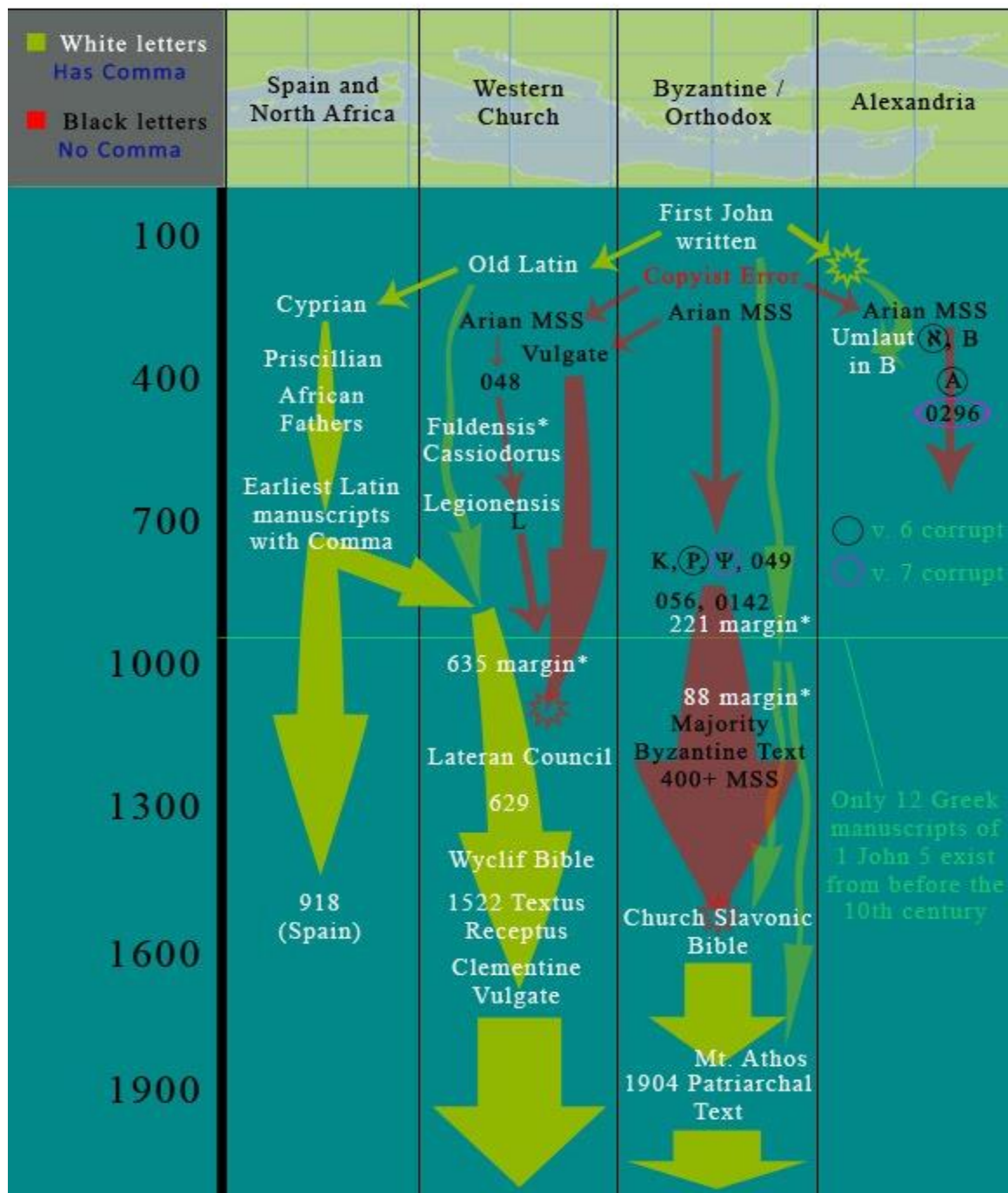
Nowhere else in the Bible do we read of a heretic preventing a community of believers from receiving the actual epistles of an Apostle. Diotrephes could have modified the contents of John's epistles to suit his own theology (whatever they were) and his congregation would not have known. He apparently had enough power and influence to do so since even John could not get to the believers under Diotrephes' control. Diotrephes appears to be a prime candidate for corrupting John's epistles.

If Diotrephes expunged the Comma before 100 AD, there would have been ample time for the corrupted reading to receive wide circulation by the rise of Sabellianism in 220 AD. Trinitarians who were aware of both readings of 1 John 5:7-8 by 220 AD may have been inclined to believe the Comma to be a Sabellian forgery. These Trinitarians may have preferred the copies without the Comma, and thereafter the Comma-free copies may have gained irreversible ascendancy. Of course, Diotrephes' deletion of the Comma is mere speculation. And with the clear evidence of Arian and Gnostic hostility towards John's Trinitarian statements, we need not rely on the hypothesis that Diotrephes expunged the Comma. However, the fact that John had such an influential rival validates the hypothesis that John's epistles may have been corrupted even during John's lifetime.

Continuous preservation

The Johannine Comma is not a novel invention of late medieval Catholicism. There is an unbroken lineage of the preservation of the Comma from early times. The Comma was preserved in the Western Latin stream of transmission. There is nothing to be apologetic about this since the majority of Christians from the 4th century to the 16th century spoke and understood Latin. Hence the Comma was available to the majority of Christians throughout history. Furthermore, the Comma was also preserved by the Greek Church albeit as a minority reading in the margins, and reinstated in the text of the Epistle by the Greek Orthodox Church in modern times. The following chart maps the unbroken preservation of the Comma:

Preservation of the Johannine Comma



The Comma has been subject to hostility throughout history, especially in the Greek Church in early times. But the Comma has survived and is now represented in the official ecclesiastical texts of the three major Churches. The Protestant Church has the Comma in the Textus Receptus. The Roman Catholic Church has the Comma in the Clementine Vulgate. The Eastern Orthodox Church has the Comma in the 1904 Patriarchal Text.

Despite its long absence in the Greek stream of transmission, the Comma has made it back into the official Greek New Testament of the Greek Orthodox Church, the [1904 Patriarchal Text](#). This ecclesiastical text is based on the readings of about sixty Greek lectionaries dating from the ninth to the sixteenth century (John M. Rife, "The Antoniadēs Greek Testament" *Prolegomena to the Study of the Lectionary Text*. 57-66.). Early nineteenth century textual critic Johann Griesbach supposed that the Comma in these Lectionaries of the sixteenth century came from the new printed editions of the Greek New Testament which contained the Comma (Griesbach, *Diatribē in Locum I Ioann.* 5. 7- 8, V2, 1806, p. 12). The Comma came back into the Greek stream in this manner as the Greek Orthodox Church deferred to the Western tradition of including the Comma. Thus the Comma is thoroughly preserved for us today and can be accepted as authentic Scripture. – *KJV TODAY*

Sources:

- Constantin Tischendorf, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 8th major edition (1869, 1872).
- Digital Nestle-Aland Prototype, University of Münster Institute for New Testament Textual Research: <http://nttranscripts.uni-muenster.de/>
- *Nestle-Aland: Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th revised edition (2006).
- The Codex Sinaiticus Project Website: <http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/>
- *United Bible Society: The Greek New Testament*, 4th revised edition (2001).

